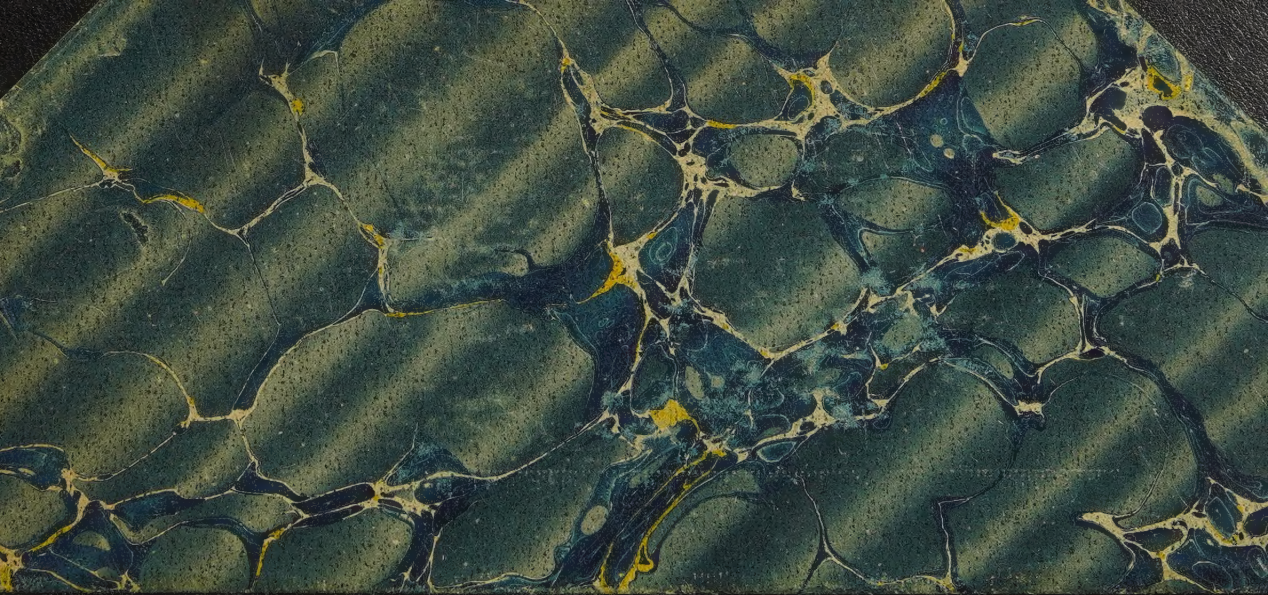

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CONTENTS OF VOL. XVII.

	PAGE
The Law of Retribution,	1
"Take Heed how ye Hear."	45
A Discourse on the Church,	61
Unitarianism the Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ,	107
A Discourse in Commemoration of the Life and Character of Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., D. D.	141
Unitarianism the Doctrine of Matthew's Gospel,	179
The Signification and Value of a "Good Life."	207
The relative Obligations of Christians to the Heathen,	221
Thoughts on Christian Doctrine; a candid Answer to candid Inquiries,	245
The Atonement,	281
What is Unitarianism? Or, a Statement of the Views of Unitarian Congregationalists of the United States; with some Historical and Statistical Notices of the Denomination,	305
The Nineteenth Report of the American Unitarian Association, with the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, May 28, 1844,	337

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THE

LAW OF RETRIBUTION.

By ORVILLE DEWEY, D. D.

PRINTED FOR THE

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THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION.

DISCOURSE I.

"BE NOT DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP." — Galatians, vi. 7.

I UNDERSTAND these words, my brethren, as laying down in some respects a stricter law of retribution than is yet received even by those who are considered as its strictest interpreters. There is much dispute about this law at the present day; and there are many who are jealous, and very properly jealous, of every encroachment upon its salutary principles. But even those who profess to hold the strictest faith on this subject, and who, in my judgment, do hold a faith concerning what they call the infinity of man's ill-desert that is warranted neither by reason nor Scripture, — even they, nevertheless, do often present views of conversion, and of God's mercy, and of the actual scene of retribution, which, in my apprehension, detract from the wholesome severity of the rule by which we are to be judged. Their views may be strong enough, too strong; and yet not strict enough, nor impressive enough. Tell a man that he deserves to suffer infinitely, and I am not sure that it will by any means come so near his conscience as to tell him that he deserves to endure some small, but specific evil. Tell

him that he deserves an infinity of suffering, and he may blindly assent to it; it is a vast and vague something that presses upon his conscience, and has no edge nor point: but put a sword into the hand of conscience, and how might this easy assenter to the justice of infinite torments grow astonished and angry, if you were to tell him that he deserved to suffer but the amputation of a single finger! Or tell the sinner that he shall suffer for his offences a thousand ages hence, and though it may be true, and will be true, if he goes on offending till that period, yet it will not come home to his heart with half so vivid an impression, or half so effectual a restraint, as to make him foresee the pain, the remorse, and shame, that he will suffer the very next hour. Tell him, in fine, as it is common to do, — tell him of retribution in the gross, and however strong the language, he may listen to it with apathy; he often does so; but if you could show him what sin is doing within him at every moment, how every successive offence lays on another and another shade upon the brightness of the soul, how every transgression, as if it held the very sword of justice, is cutting off, one by one, the fine and invisible fibres that bind the soul to happiness, and then, by all the love of happiness, such a man must be interested and concerned for himself. Or tell the bad man that he must be converted or he cannot be happy hereafter, and you declare to him an impressive truth; but how much would it add to the impression, if, instead of leaving him to suppose that bare conversion, — in the popular sense of the term, — that the brief work of an hour would bring him to heaven, you should say to him, "You shall be just as happy hereafter as you are pure and upright, and no more; you shall be just as happy as your character prepares you to be, and no more; your moral, like your mental character, though it may take its date or

its impulse from a certain moment, is not formed in a moment; your character, that is to say, the habit of your mind, is the result of many thoughts, and feelings, and efforts, and these are bound together by many natural and strong ties, so that it is strictly true, — and this is the great law of retribution, — that all coming experience is to be affected by every present feeling; that every future moment of being must answer for every present moment; that one moment, sacrificed to sin or lost to improvement, is for ever sacrificed and lost; that one year's delay, or one hour's wilful delay, to enter the right path, is to put you back so far in the everlasting pursuit of happiness; and that every sin — ay, every sin of a good man — is thus to be answered for, though not according to the full measure of its ill-desert, yet according to a rule of unbending rectitude and impartiality. This is undoubtedly the strict and solemn Law of Retribution; but how much its strictness has really entered, I say not now into our hearts and lives, — I will take up that serious question in another season of meditation, — but how much the strictness of the principles of retribution has entered into our creeds, our theories, our speculations, is a matter that deserves attention.

It is worthy of remark, indeed, that there is *no* doctrine which is more universally received, and at the same time more universally evaded, than this very doctrine which we are considering. It is universally received, because the very condition of human existence involves it, — because it is a matter of experience; every after period of life being affected, and known to be affected, by the conduct of every earlier period, — manhood by youth, and age by manhood, — professional success by the preparation for it, — domestic happiness by conjugal fidelity and parental care. It is thus seen that life is a tissue, into which the thread of this con-

nection is everywhere interwoven. It is thus seen that the law of retribution presses upon every man, whether he thinks of it or not; that it pursues him through all the courses of life, with a step that never falters nor tires, and with an eye that never sleeps nor slumbers. The doctrine of a future retribution has been universally received, too, because it has been felt that in no other way could the impartiality of God's government be vindicated; that if the best and the worst men in the world, if the ruthless oppressor and his innocent victim, if the proud and boasting injurer, and the meek and patient sufferer, are to go to the same reward, to the same approbation of the good and just God, there is an end of all discrimination, of all moral government, and of all light upon the mysteries of Providence. It has been felt, moreover, that character carries with it, and in its most intimate nature, the principles of retribution, and that it must work out weal or woe for its possessor.

But this doctrine, so universally received, has been, I say, as universally evaded. The classic mythologies of paganism did, indeed, teach that there were infernal regions; but few were doomed to them, and for those few who, failing of the rites of sepulture, or of some other ceremonial qualification, were liable to that doom, an escape was provided by their wandering on the banks of the Styx awhile, as preparatory to their entering Elysium. So, too, the creed of the Catholics, though it spoke of hell, had also its purgatory to soften the horrors of retribution. And now there are, as I think, among the body of Protestants, certain speculative, or rather, may I say, mechanical views of the future state, and of the preparation for it, and of the principles of mercy in its allotments, that tend to let down the strictness of that law which for ever binds us to the retributive future.

Is it not a question, let me barely ask in passing, whether this universal evasion does not show that the universal belief has been extravagant? whether men have not believed too much to believe it strictly and specifically to its minutest point? It certainly is a very striking fact, that, while the popular creed teaches that almost the whole living world is going down to everlasting torments, the popular sympathy interposes to save from that doom almost the whole dying world.

But not to dwell on this observation, I shall proceed now briefly to consider some of those modern views which detract from the strictness of the law of retribution.

I. And the first which I shall notice is the view of the actual scene of retribution as consisting of two conditions, entirely opposite, and altogether different. Mankind, according to this view, are divided into two distinct classes, the one of which is to enjoy infinite happiness, and the other to suffer infinite misery. It is a far stronger case than would be made by the supposition, that man's varied efforts to gain worldly good were to be rewarded by assigning to one portion of the race boundless wealth, and to the other absolute poverty; for it is infinite happiness on the one hand, and not the bare destitution of it, but infinite misery, on the other.

Let me observe, before I proceed further to point out what I consider to be the defect which attends this popular view of retribution, that the view itself is not warranted by Scripture. The Bible teaches us that virtue will be rewarded and sin punished; that the good shall receive good, and the evil shall receive evil; and that is all that it teaches us. It unfolds to us this simple, and solemn, and purely spiritual issue, and nothing more.

All else is figurative; and so the most learned interpret-

ers have generally agreed to consider it. It is obvious that representations of what passes in the future world, taken from the present world, must be of this character. When heaven is represented as a city, and hell as a deep abyss, and Christ is described as coming to judgment on a throne, with the state and splendor of an Oriental monarch, and separating *in form, and visibly* separating, the righteous from the wicked, we know, or should know, that these representations are figurative descriptions of a single and simple fact; and this fact is, — and this is the whole of the fact that is taught us, — that a distinction will be made between good men and bad men; and that they will be rewarded or punished hereafter, according to the character they have formed and sustained here.

It is to be remembered, too, in appealing to the Scriptures, that there are other teachings in them than those which are figurative, and teachings which bind us far more to the letter. It is written, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; and that God will render unto every man according to his deeds, — i. e. according to his character, as by deeds is doubtless meant in this instance.

But now, to return to the view already stated, I maintain that the boundless distinction which it makes in the states of the future life is *not* rendering unto men according to their deeds; that is to say, according to their character. Because of this character there are many diversities, and degrees, and shades. Men differ in virtue precisely as they differ in intelligence; by just as many and imperceptible degrees. As many as are the diversities of moral education in the world, as numerous as are the shades of circumstance in life, as various as are the degrees of moral capacity and effort in various minds, so must the results differ. If character were formed by machinery, there might be but

two samples. But if it is formed by voluntary agency, the results must be as diversified and complicated as the operations of that agency. And the fact, which every man's observation must show him, undoubtedly is, that virtue in men differs just as intelligence does, — differs, I repeat, by just as many and imperceptible degrees. But now suppose that men were to be rewarded for their intelligence hereafter. Would all the immense variety of cases be met by two totally different and opposite allotments? Take the scale of character, and mark on it all the degrees of difference, and all the divisions of a degree. Now what point on the scale will you select, at which to make the infinite difference of allotments? Select it where you will, and there will be the thousandth part of a degree above rewarded with perfect happiness, and a thousandth part of a degree below doomed to perfect misery. Would this be right, with regard to the intelligence or virtue of men?

We are misled on this subject by that loose and inaccurate division of mankind, which is common, into the two classes of saints and sinners. We might as well say that all men are either strong or weak, wise or foolish, intellectual or sensual. So they are, in a general sense; but not in a sense that excludes all discrimination. And the language of the Bible, when it speaks of the good and bad, of the righteous and wicked, is to be understood with the same reasonable discrimination, with the same reasonable qualification of its meaning, as when it speaks of the rich and poor. The truth is, the matter of fact is, that from the highest point of virtue to the lowest point of wickedness, there are, I repeat, innumerable steps, and men are standing upon all these steps; they are actually found in all these gradations of character. Now to render to such beings according to their character is, not to appoint to them two

totally distinct and opposite allotments, but just as many allotments as there are shades of moral difference between them.

But does not the Bible speak of two distinct classes of men as amenable to the judgment, and of *but* two? and does it not say of the one class, "These shall go away into everlasting fire," and of the other, "but the righteous into life eternal"? Certainly it does. And so do we constantly say, that the good shall be happy and the bad shall be miserable in the coming world. But do we, or does the Bible, intend to speak without any discrimination? Especially, can the omniscient scrutiny and the unerring rule be supposed to overlook any, even the slightest, differences, and the most delicate shades of character? On the contrary, we are told that "one star differeth from another in glory"; and we are told that there is a "lowest hell"; and we are led to admit, that, in the allotments of retributive justice, the best among bad men, and the worst among good men, may come as near to each other in condition as they come in character.

I am not saying, let it be observed, that the difference even in this case is unimportant, still less that it is so in general. Nay, and the difference between the states of the very good man and the very bad man may indeed be as great as any theory supposes; it may be much greater, in fact, than any man's imagination conceives; but this is not the only difference that is to be brought into the final account; for there are many intermediate ranks between the best and the worst. I say that the difference of allotment may, nay, and that it must, be great. The truly good man, the devoted Christian, shall doubtless experience a happiness beyond his utmost expectation. The bad man, the self-indulgent, the self-ruined man, will doubtless find his doom

severer than he had looked for. I say not what it may be. But this, at least, we may be sure of, that the consequences, both of good and bad conduct, will be more serious, will strike deeper, than we are likely, amidst the gross and dim perceptions of sense, to comprehend.

But this is not the point which I am at present arguing. It is not the extent of the consequences, but it is the strict and discriminating impartiality which shall measure out these affecting results; it is the strict law by which every man shall reap the fruits of that which he sows. And I say that the artificial, imaginative, and, as I think, unauthorized ideas, which prevail with regard to a future life, let down the strictness of the law.

Let me now illustrate this by a single supposition. Suppose that you were to live in *this* world one thousand or ten thousand years; and suppose, too, that you felt that every present moment was a probation for every future moment, and that in order to be happy you must be pure; that every fault, every wrong habit of life or feeling, would tend and would continue to make you unhappy, till it was faithfully and effectually corrected, and corrected by yourself, — not by the hand of death, not by the exchange of worlds. Suppose yourself to entertain the conviction, that if you plunged into self-indulgence and sin, diseases and distempers and woes would accumulate upon you, — with no friendly interposition or rescue, no all-healing nostrum, no medicine of sovereign and miraculous efficacy to save, — that diseases, I say, and distempers and woes would accumulate upon you, in dark and darkening forms, for a thousand years. Suppose that every evil passion, anger, or avarice, or envy, or selfishness in any of its forms, would, — unless resisted and overcome, — would make you more and more miserable for a thousand years. I say that such a prospect, limited as

it is in comparison, would be more impressive and salutary, a more powerful restraint upon sin, a more powerful stimulus to improvement, than the prospect, as it is usually contemplated, of the retributions of eternity! Are we, then, making all that we ought to make of the prospect of an eternal retribution? God's justice will be as strict there as it is here. And although bodily diseases may not accumulate upon us there, yet the diseases of the soul, if we take not heed to them, will accumulate upon us; and he who has only one degree of purity and ten degrees of sin in him, must not lay that flattering unction to his soul, that death will "wash out the long arrears of guilt." I know that this is a doctrine of unbending strictness, — a doctrine, I had almost said, insufferably strict; but I believe that it is altogether true.

"But," some one may say, "if I am converted, if I have repented of my sins, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, then I have the assurance, through God's mercy, of pardon and heaven."

This statement embraces the other doctrinal evasion of the law of retribution which I proposed to consider. And I must venture to express the apprehension, that, by those who answer thus to the strict and unaccommodating demand of inwrought purity, neither conversion, nor repentance, nor the mercy of God, is understood as it ought to be.

A man says, "I am not to be judged by the Law, but by the Gospel." But when he says that, let me tell him he should take care to know what he says, and whereof he affirms. The difference between the Law and the Gospel, I believe, is much misapprehended in this respect. The Gospel is not a more easy, not a more lax, rule to walk by, but only a more encouraging rule. The Law demands rectitude, and declares that the sinner deserves the miseries of

a future life; and there it stops, and of course it leaves the offender in despair. The Gospel comes in, — and it did come in, with its teaching and prophetic sacrifices, even amidst the thunders of Sinai, — saying, If thou wilt repent and believe, if thou wilt embrace the faith and spirit of the all-humbling and all-redeeming religion, the way to happiness is still open. But does the Gospel do any more than open the way? Does it make the way more easy, more indulgent, less self-denying? Does it say you need not be as good as the Law requires, and yet you shall be none the less happy for all that? Does it say you need not do as well, and yet it shall be just as well with you? "Is Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!" Nay, be it remembered, that the solemn declaration upon which we are this day meditating, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is recorded, not in the Law, but in the Gospel.

"But if I repent," it may be said, "am I not forgiven entirely?" If you repent entirely, you are forgiven entirely, and not otherwise. What *is* repentance? It is a change of mind. That, as every scholar knows, is the precise meaning of the original word in the Scriptures which is translated repentance. It is a change of mind. If, then, your repentance, your change of mind, is entire, your forgiveness, your happiness, is complete; but on no other principle, and in no other proportion. Sorrow is only one of the indications of this repentance, or change of heart; though it has unfortunately usurped in common use the whole meaning of the word. Sorrow is not the only indication of repentance; for joy as truly springs from it. It is not, therefore, the bare fact that you are sorry, however sincerely and disinterestedly sorry, for your offences, that will deliver you from all the suffering which your sins and sinful habits must occasion. You may be sorry, for instance, and truly

sorry, for your anger; yet if the passion breaks out again, it must again give you pain; and it must for ever give you pain while it lives. You may grieve for your vices. Does that grief instantly stop the course of penalty? Will it instantly repair a shattered constitution? You may regret, in declining life, a state of mind produced by too much devotion to worldly gain, — the want of intellectual and moral resources and habits. Will the dearth and the desolation depart from your mind when that regret enters it? Will even the tears of repentance immediately cause freshness and verdure to spring up in your path?

"But," it may be said, once more, "does not all depend on our being converted, or being born again? And is not conversion, is not the new birth, the event of a moment?"

I answer, with all the certainty of conviction that I am capable of, No; it is not the event of a moment. That conversion which fits a soul for heaven is *not* the event of a moment. And, my brethren, I would not answer thus in a case where there is controversy, if I did not think it a matter of the most serious importance. Can any thing be more fatal, can any one of all loose doctrines be more loose, than to tell an offender who is going to the worst excesses in sin, that he may escape all the evil results, — all the results of fifty, sixty, seventy years of self-indulgence, — by one instant's experience? Can any one of us believe, dare we believe, that one moment's virtue can prepare us for the happiness of eternity? Can we believe this, especially when we are, on every page of the Bible, commanded to watch, and pray, and strive, and labor, and by patient continuance in well-doing to seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, — and this as the express condition of obtaining eternal life or happiness?

No, Christians! subjects of the Christian law! — no con-

version, no repentance, no mercy of Heaven, will save you from the final operation of that sentence, or should save you from its warning now. "Be not deceived," — as if there was special danger of being deceived here, — "be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

It is a high and strict, I had almost said, a terrible, discrimination. Yet let us bring it home to our hearts; although it be as a sword to cut off some cherished sin. O this miserable and slavish folly of inquiring whether we have enough piety and virtue to save us! Do men ever talk thus about the acquisition of riches or honors? Do they act as if all their solicitude was to ascertain and to stop at the point that would just save them from want or secure them from disgrace? "Enough virtue to save you," do you say? The very question shows that you have not enough. It shows that your views of salvation are yet technical and narrow, if not selfish. It shows that all your thoughts of retribution yet turn to solicitude and apprehension.

The law of retribution is the law of God's goodness. It addresses not only the fear of sin, but the love of improvement. Its grand requisition is that of progress. It urges us at every step to press forward. And however many steps we may have taken, it urges us still to take another and another, by the same pressing reason with which it urged us to take the first step.

Yes, by the same pressing reason. Let him who thinks himself a good man, who thinks that he is converted, and is on the right side, and in the safe state, and in the way to heaven, and who, nevertheless, from this false reasoning and this presumptuous security, indulges in little sins, irritability,

covetousness, or worldly pride, — let him know that his doom shall be hereafter, and is now, a *kind of hell*, compared with the blessedness in store for loftier virtue and holier piety; and let him know, too, that, compared with that loftier standard, he has almost as much reason to tremble for himself, as the poor sinner he looks down upon. For if woes are denounced against the impenitent sinner, so are woes denounced, in terms scarcely less awful, against the secure, lukewarm, negligent Christian. God is no respecter of persons, nor of professions. It is written that "he will render to *every* man according to his deeds." It is written, too, that "*whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I repeat that language of fearful discrimination, "*whatsoever* — a man *soweth* — *that* — not something else — *that* — shall he also *reap*." That which you *are doing*, — be it good or evil, be it grave or gay, — that which you are doing to-day and to-morrow, — each thought, each feeling, each action, each event, every passing hour, every breathing moment, is contributing to form the character by which you are to be judged. Every particle of influence that goes to form that aggregate, your character, shall, in that future scrutiny, be sifted out from the mass, and shall fall, particle by particle, with ages perhaps intervening, — shall fall, a distinct contribution to the sum of your joys or your woes. Thus every idle word, every idle hour, shall give answer in the judgment. Think not, against the closeness and severity of this inquisition, to put up any barrier of theological speculation. Conversion, repentance, pardon, mean they what they will, mean nothing that will save you from reaping, down to the very root and ground of good or evil, that which you have sowed. Think not to wrap that future world in any blackness of darkness, or any folding flame, as if for the imagination to be alarmed were all you had to

feel or fear. Clearly, distinctly, shall the voice of accusation fall upon the guilty ear; as when, upon earth, the man of crime comes reluctantly forth from his hiding-place, and stands at the bar of his country's justice, and the voices of his associates say, "Thou didst it!" If there be any unchangeable, any adamantine fate in the universe, this is that fate, — that the future shall for ever bring forth the fruits of the past.

Take care, then, what thou sowest, as if thou wert taking care for eternity. That sowing, of which the Scripture speaketh, what is it? Yesterday, perhaps, some evil temptation came upon you, — the opportunity of unrighteous gain, or of unhallowed indulgence, came, either in the sphere of business or of pleasure, of society or of solitude. If you yielded to it, then and there did you plant a seed of bitterness and sorrow. To-morrow, it may be, will threaten discovery; and agitated, alarmed, you will cover the sin, and bury it deeper, in falsehood and hypocrisy. In the hiding bosom, in the fruitful soil of kindred vices, that sin dies not, but thrives and grows; and other, and still other germs of evil gather around the accursed root, till from that single seed of corruption there springs up in the soul all that is horrible in habitual lying, knavery, or vice. Long before such a life comes to its close, its poor victim may have advanced within the very precincts of hell. Yes, the hell of debt, of disease, of ignominy, or of remorse, may gather its shadows around the steps of the transgressor, even on earth; and yet these, — if holy Scripture be unerring, and sure experience be prophetic, — these are but the beginnings of sorrows. The evil deed may be done, alas! in a moment, — in one fatal moment; but conscience never dies; memory never sleeps: guilt never can become innocence, and

remorse can never, never whisper peace. Pardon may come from heaven; but self-forgiveness may never come.

Beware, then, thou who art tempted to evil, — and every being before me is tempted to evil, — beware what thou layest up for the future; beware what thou layest up in the archives of eternity. Thou who wouldst wrong thy neighbour, beware, lest the thought of that injured man, wounded and suffering from thine injury, be a pang which a thousand years may not deprive of its bitterness. Thou who wouldst break into the house of innocence, and rifle it of its treasure, beware, lest, when a thousand ages have rolled their billows over thee, the moan of its distress may not have died away from thine ear. Thou who wouldst build the desolate throne of ambition in thy heart, beware what thou art doing with all thy devices, and circumventings, and selfish schemings, lest desolation and loneliness be on thy path as it stretches into the long futurity. Thou, in fine, who art living a negligent and irreligious life, beware! beware how thou livest, — for bound up with that life is the immutable principle of an endless retribution, — bound up with that life are elements of God's creating, which shall never spend their force, which shall be unfolding and unfolding with the ages of eternity. Beware, I say once more, and be not deceived. *Be not deceived:* God is not mocked; God, who has formed thy nature thus to answer to the future, is not mocked; his law can never be abrogated, his justice can never be eluded; beware, then, — be forewarned; since for ever and for ever will it be true, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

DISCOURSE II.

"BE NOT DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP." — Galatians, vi. 7.

THE views which are usually presented of a future retribution are characterized, as I have observed in my last discourse, rather by strength than by strictness of representation. The great evil attending the common statements of this doctrine, I shall now venture to say, is not that they are too alarming. Men are not enough alarmed at the dangers of a sinful course. No men are; no men, though they sit under the most terrifying dispensation of preaching that ever was devised. But the evil is, that alarm is addressed too much to the imagination, and too little to the reason and conscience. Neither Whitefield, nor Baxter, nor Edwards, — though the horror produced by his celebrated sermon "On the Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," is a matter of tradition in New England to this very day, — yet no one of them ever preached too much terror, though they may have preached it too exclusively; but the evil was, that they preached terror, I repeat, too much to the imagination, and too little to the reason and conscience. Of mere fright, there may be too much; but of real, rational fear, there never *can* be too much. Sin, vice, a corrupt mind, a guilty life, and the woes naturally flowing from these, never can be too much dreaded. It is one thing for the preacher to

deal in mathematical calculations of infinite suffering, to dwell upon the eternity of hell torments, to speak of literal fires, and of burning in them for ever; and with these representations, it is easy to scare the imagination, to awaken horror, and a horror so great as to be at war with the clear, calm, and faithful discriminations of conscience. With such means, it is easy to produce a great excitement in the mind. But he who should, or who *could*, unveil the realities of a strict and spiritual retribution, show what every sinner loses, show what every sinner must suffer in and through the very character he forms, — show, too, how bitterly every good man must sorrow for every sin, here or hereafter, — show, in fine, what sin is, and for ever must be, to an immortal nature, would make an impression more deep, and sober, and effectual.

It is not my purpose at present to attempt any detail of this nature, though I shall be governed by the observations I have made in the views which I *am* to present, and for which I venture to ask a rational, and calm, and most serious consideration.

The future is to answer for the present. This is the great law of retribution. And so obviously necessary and just is it, so evidently does our character create our welfare or woe, so certainly must it give us pain or pleasure, as long as it goes with us, whether in this world or another world, that it seems less requisite to support the doctrine by argument, than to save it from evasions.

There are such evasions. No theology has yet come up to the strictness of this law. It is still more true, that no practice has yet come up to it. There are theoretical evasions, — and I think they are to be found in the views which are often presented of conversion, and repentance, and of God's mercy, and the actual scenes of retribution; but there

is one practical evasion, one into which the whole world has fallen, and so dangerous, so momentous in its danger, that it may well deserve, for one season of meditation, I believe, to engross our entire and undivided attention.

This grand evasion, this great and fatal mistake, may be stated in general terms to be *the substitution of something as a preparation for future happiness, in place of devoting the whole life to it*, or to a course which is fitted to procure it. This evasion takes the particular form, perhaps, of an expectation that some sudden and extraordinary experience may, at a future time, accomplish what is necessary to prepare the mind for happiness and heaven; or that certain circumstances, such as sickness and affliction, may, at some subsequent period of life, force the growth of that which is not cultivated now, and may thus remedy the fearful and fatal neglect; or it is an expectation, — and this is the most prevalent form of the error, — that old age or death, when it comes, will have power to penetrate the heart with emotion, and subdue it to repentance, and prepare it for heaven. The subject — yet, it must be feared, to be the victim — of this stupendous error, is convinced, that, in order to be happy eventually, he must become pure; — there is no principle of indulgence, there is no gospel of mercy, that can absolve him from that necessity, — he must become pure; he must be pious; his nature must be exalted and refined. It is his nature, his mind, that is to be happy, and he is convinced by experience, that his mind must be cultivated, purified, prepared, for that end. But he is not doing this work to-day, nor does he expect to do it to-morrow; he is not doing it this month, nor does he expect to do it next month; he is not doing it this year, nor does he, in particular, expect to do it next year; and thus month after month, and year after year, are passing, and one season of life after another is

stealing away : and the only hope is, that in some tremendous exigency, or by some violent paroxysm, when fear and remorse and disease and death are darkly struggling together, *that* may be done, for which the whole previous course of life has not been found sufficient.

But is it true, — for I am willing to pause at this point, and deliberately to consider the question, — is it true, can it be true, some one may ask, that a mistake so gross, so irrational, so at war with all that we know about character, about its formation, and its necessary results, — can it be true, that such a mistake, about the whole vast concern of our happiness, is actually made by any of us? Can it be, you will say, that men, with reason, and experience, and Scripture to guide them, — can it be that men in their senses are substituting, in place of that deliberate formation of their character for happiness for which life is given, some brief preparation for it, at a future period, and especially at the last period of their lives?

I am persuaded that it is true, my brethren, however strange ; and these are the considerations that convince me of it.

In the first place there are multitudes around us, that hope and expect to be happy hereafter, who are conscious that they are not preparing for it ; who acknowledge at every successive stage of life, that if they were instantly to die, without any further opportunity to prepare for it, there would be little or no hope for them ; who feel that, if the very character which they are now, every day, forming, were to go to the judgment, their case would be desperate ; who hope, therefore, most evidently, not to be judged by the prevailing tenor of their lives, but secretly expect to do something at last to retrieve the errors, the follies, and sins, which they are now daily committing.

Again; although it is a common impression, that but *few* LIVE in an habitual preparation for heaven, the impression is almost *as* common, that but few actually *die* unprepared. Of almost every individual who leaves the world, something is told which encourages the hopes of survivors concerning him. I stand before you, my brethren, as a Christian minister, and I solemnly declare, that, familiar as I have been with that sad and mournful scene, the death of the wicked, it has almost invariably left this strange and delusive hope behind it. Indeed, the extreme solicitude with which every symptom of preparation is marked in these circumstances, the trembling anxiety with which every word and look is caught, but too plainly indicate the same impression. What the amount of this proof is, we will presently consider. It is sufficient at this point of the inquiry to state, that it is collected and arranged as carefully, and offered as confidently, as if it were material; that it encourages those who repeat and those who hear it; that the instance of death is very rare, in which surviving friends do not tell you that they trust and believe that all is well. Even when a man has led an eminently pious life, many are apt to feel as if the proof of his piety was not consummated, unless he had died a happy and triumphant death: as though it were to be expected, — it may happen so, indeed, and we have great cause to thank God when it does, — but as though it were to be expected, and looked for as a matter of course, that in feebleness and distress of body and mind, and the sinking of all the faculties, the mind should exhibit its utmost energy, — as if, amid the cold damps of death, the expiring flame of sensibility should rise the highest. It is to be feared that good men, and with the best intentions, no doubt, have yet given great distress to many faithful Christians, and done great injury to others, by countenancing this

unreasonable notion. The great question is, not how a good man dies, but how he has *lived*.

The third and final reason, which convinces me of the prevalence of this mistake which I am considering, is the almost universal dread of sudden death. It is not to be denied, indeed, that a change so great as that of death, and so mysterious too, is, in itself, and naturally, fitted to awaken a feeling of apprehension. But I maintain that the principal reason for this apprehension is the fear of consequences, "the dread of something *after* death"; and that there is a vague hope in almost every mind, that some preparation could be made, at the last, if only a little time were granted for it. And, indeed, if we all entertained a settled conviction, that we are to reap as we have sowed, that we are to be miserable or happy in the other world, according to the character we have formed in this, that we are to be judged by the life we live, and not by the death we die; what would it import to us, whether we fell suddenly in the paths of life, or slowly declined from them, — whether we sunk at once beneath the stroke of an apoplexy, or more slowly under the attack of a consumption? Something it would import to us, no doubt, as friends; for we should wish to give our dying counsels; but as expectants of retribution, what could the time of a week or a month's last sickness avail us? I will answer: and I say, as much, — by the most favorable supposition, — as much as such a space of time in any part of life could avail us; and no more.

Such, then, and so fearful, and proved to be so fearful by the plainest indications, is the moral state of multitudes. Life is given them for the cultivation of a sacred virtue, of a lofty piety, of pure and godlike affections, as the only way to future improvement and happiness. They are not devoting life to this end; they know they are not; they confess

they are not; and their hope is, — yes, the hope on which they rest their whole being is, that by some hasty effort or paroxysm of emotion, in the feeble and helpless time of sickness, or in the dark day of death, they shall be able to redeem the lost hope of a negligent life. If only a week or a month of health were offered them to prepare, — if that specific time, a week or a month, were taken out from the midst of life, and they were solemnly told that this would be all the time they would have to prepare for eternity, they would be in despair; and yet they hope to do this in a month or a week of pain and languishment and distracting agitation. It is as if the husbandman should sport away the summer season, and then should think to retrieve his error by planting his fields in the autumn. It is as if the student should trifle away the season appointed for his education, and then, when the time came for entering upon his profession, should think to make up for his deficiencies by a few weeks of violent, hurried, and irregular application. It shows, alas! that the world, with all its boasts of an enlightened age, has not yet escaped the folly of those days of superstition, when the eucharist was administered to dying persons, and was forcibly administered, if the patient had no longer sense to receive it; or when men deferred their baptism till death; as if the future state were to depend on these last ceremonies. And as well depend on ceremonies, — and more consistently could we do so, — as depend on any momentary preparation for happiness. As well build a church or a monastery to atone for our sins, as to build that fabric of error in our imagination.

It is not for us, I know, to limit the Almighty. It is not for us to say, that he cannot change the soul in the last moments of its stay on earth. But this we may fearlessly say; that he does it, if at all, by a miraculous agency, of whose

working we can have no conception, and of whose results, by the very supposition, we can have no knowledge.

I desire, my brethren, to state this point with all sufficient caution. I not only do not deny that God has power to convert the soul in the last moments of life, but I do not absolutely deny that there may be some such instances in the passing away of every generation. I do not know, and none of us can know, whether such miracles are performed or not. It is commonly thought that the case recorded in Luke's Gospel, of the thief on the cross, is an instance of this nature. But I do not think it can be pronounced to be such. We know not how much time he may have had to repent and form a new character. He says, "We indeed suffer justly"; but the act for which he suffered may have been a single act, in which he had fallen from a generally good life. But admit that such interpositions do take place; is it safe to rely upon them? We do not know that they do. We do not know, that, in the passing away of all the generations of mankind, there has been one such instance. Is it safe to rely, in so tremendous a case, upon what we do not know, and upon what, after all, may never be? My object is to show that it is not safe; and for this purpose, I shall reason upon the general principle. The general principle is, that the future must answer for the present; the future of this life for the present of this life; the next month for this month; the next year for this year; and in the same way, the next life for this life. I say, then, that the expectation of any hasty retrieving of a bad month, of a bad year, of a bad life, is irrational, and unwarrantable, and ought to be considered as desperate.

I. And for the purpose of showing this, I observe, in the first place, that the expectation of preparing for futurity hastily, or by any other means than the voluntary and delib-

erate formation of right and virtuous habits in the mind; or that the expectation of preparing for death when it comes, is opposed to the professed import of that Sacred Volume, which gives law alike to our hopes and our fears.

It is opposed to the obvious, and the professed, and the leading character of the Bible. What is that character? What is the Bible? It is a revelation of laws, motives, directions, and excitements to religious virtue. But all of these are useless, if this character is to be formed by a miraculous energy, at a perilous conjuncture, or in a last moment. Motives must be contemplated, directions must be understood, excitements must be felt, to be effectual; and all this must be done deliberately, must be many times repeated, must be combined with diligence and patience and faith, and must be slowly, as every thing is, — slowly wrought into the character, in order to be effectual.

But it may be said, "If the rule is so strict, where is the *mercy* of the Gospel?" I answer, that its very mercy is engaged to make us pure; that its mercy would be no mercy, if it did not do this; and that of becoming pure and good there is but one way, and that is the way of voluntary effort, — an effort to be assisted by Divine grace, indeed, but none the less, on that account, an effort and an endeavour, a watching and a striving, a conflict and a victory. I answer, again, that the mercy of the Gospel is a moral and rational, a high and glorious principle. It is not a principle of laxity in morals. It is not a principle of indulgence to the heart. It is a moral principle, and not a wonder-working machinery, by which a man is to be lifted up and borne away from guilt to purity, from earth to heaven, he knows not how. It offers to fabricate no wings for the immortal flight. It is a rational principle, and is not based upon the subversion of all the laws of experience and wisdom. The

Gospel opens the *way* to heaven, — opens the way to poor, sinful, ill-deserving creatures. Is not that mercy enough? Shall the guilty and lost spurn that, and demand more? It opens the way, I repeat; but then it lays its instructions, commands, and warnings thickly upon that way. With unnumbered directions to faith, and patience, and prayer, and toil, and self-denial, it marks out every step of that way. It tells us, again and again, that *such* is its way of salvation, and no other. In other words, it offers us happiness, and prescribes the terms. And those terms, if they were of a meaner character, if they were low and lax, would degrade even our nature, and we could not respect them. It would, in fact, be no mercy to natures like ours, to treat them in any other way.

In speaking of the Scriptural representations on this subject, the parable of "the laborers in the vineyard" may probably occur to you, in which he who came at the eleventh hour received as much as he who had borne the heat and burden of the day. I suppose the parable has no relation whatever to this subject. It cannot intend to teach that he who is a Christian during his whole life is no more an object of the Divine approbation, and is to be no more happy, than he who is so for a very small part of it. It evidently refers to the introduction of the Christian dispensation; it relates to the Jews and Gentiles, as nations: meaning that the Gentiles, who came later into covenant with God, would be as favorably received as the Jews.

To interpret this parable as encouraging men to put off their preparation for futurity till death, if there were no other objection, would contradict, I repeat, all the Scriptural information we have on this subject. This would appear, if you should carry to the oracles of divine truth any question whatever about piety, or virtue, or the qualification for

heaven. What is piety itself? A momentary exercise, or a habit? Something thrown into the heart in a mass, or a state of the heart itself, formed by long effort and care? Does the great qualification for heaven consist in one, two, or ten good exercises, or in a good character? And to what is that judgment to relate, which will decide our future condition? "Who will render," says the sacred record, "to every man according to his deeds!"

Open that most solemn and formal account of the judgment contained in the 25th chapter of Matthew; and what is the great test? I still answer, deeds; deeds of piety and charity, the conduct, the character, the permanent affections of each individual. But still further to decide the question, if it can be necessary, let it be asked, What is that heaven of which we hear and say so much? What is heaven? Are we still, like children, fancying that heaven is a beautiful city, into which one needs only the powers of locomotion to enter? Do we not know that heaven is in the mind, — in the greatness and purity and elevation of our immortal nature? If piety and virtue, then, are a habit and state of mind expressed and acted out in a life that is holy; if the judgment has relation to this alone; if heaven consist in this; what hope can there be in a brief and slight preparation?

II. No, my friends, the terms on which we receive happiness, — and I now appeal to reason in the second place, — the terms on which we receive true, moral, satisfying happiness, cannot be easy. They are not; experience shows that they are not; life shows that they are not; and eternity will but develop the same strict law; for it is a part of our nature; it is a part of the nature and reason of things. The senses may yield us such pleasure as they can yield, without effort; taste may delight us, and imagination

may minister to us, in careless reverie; but conscience does not offer to us its happiness on such terms. I know not what may be the law for other beings, in some other sphere; but I know that no truly, morally happy being was ever made here, but through much effort, long culture, frequent self-denial, and abiding faith, patience, and prayer. To be truly happy, — what is so difficult? What is so rare? And is heaven, think you, — the blessed consummation of all that man can ask, — to be obtained at less expense than it will cost to gain one pure, calm day upon earth? For even this comparatively trifling boon, one blessed day, one day of religious joy, one day of joy in meditation and prayer, one day of happiness that is spiritual, and not physical nor circumstantial, — even this comparatively slight boon, I say, cannot be gained without long preparation of mind, and heart, and habit. There are multitudes around us and of us, to whom, at this moment, one such day's happiness is a thing just as impossible as it would be in that day to make a world! And shall they think to escape this very law of happiness under which they are actually living, and to fly away to heaven on the wings of imagination? — to pass at once from unfaithfulness to reward, from apathy to ecstasy, from the neglect and dislike of prayer to the blessed communion of heavenly worship, from this hour of being, absorbed in sense and the world, to an eternity of spiritual glory and triumph? No; be assured that facts are here, as they are everywhere, worth more than fancies, — be they those of dreaming visionaries or ingenious theologians; if you are not now happy in penitence, and humility, and prayer, and the love of God, you are not in fact prepared to be happy in them hereafter. No, between the actual state of mind prevailing in many, and the bliss of heaven, "there is a great gulf fixed," — over which no wing of mortal nor

angel was ever spread. No; the law of essential, enduring, triumphant happiness is labor and long preparation for it; and it is a law which will never, never, — never be annulled!

There is a law, too, concerning habits. It is implied in the following language. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may those who are accustomed to do evil learn to do well." Habit is no slight bond. Slightly at first, and gently afterwards, may it have drawn its silken cords around us; but not so are its bonds to be cast from us; nor can they, like a green withe, be broken by one gigantic effort. No, the bonds of habit are chains and fetters that must be worn off. Through the long process of slow and imperceptible degrees, they must be severed with weariness, and galling, and bitter anguish.

"Can it be supposed," says an eloquent writer and preacher, "that, where the vigor of life has been spent in the establishment of vicious propensities; where all the vivacity of youth, and all the soberness of manhood, and all the wisdom of old age, have been given to the service of sin; where vice has been growing with the growth, and strengthening with the strength; where it has spread out with the limbs of the stripling, and become rigid with the fibres of the aged, — can it, I say, be supposed, that the labors of such a life are to be overthrown by one last exertion of the mind, impaired with disease, by the convulsive exercise of an affrighted spirit, and by the inarticulate and feeble sounds of an expiring breath?"

Besides, the rule is as equitable as, in the divine ordination of things, it is necessary. The judgment which ordains that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, is a righteous judgment. It is easy, no doubt, to regret a bad life, when it is just over. When death comes, and the man

must leave his sinful indulgences and pleasures; or when he has no longer any capacity for enjoying them, — when sickness has enfeebled the appetites, or age has chilled the passions, — then, indeed, is it but a slight sacrifice, and a yet poorer merit in him to feel regret. But regret, let it be considered, is not repentance! And while the former may be easy and almost involuntary, the other — the repentance — may be as hard as the adverse tendencies of a whole life can make it. Yes, the hardest of all things then will be to repent. Yes, I repeat, that which is relied upon to save a man, after the best part of life has been lost, has become by the very habits of that life almost a moral impossibility.

And the regret, the selfish regret, — can it be accepted? I ask not if it can be accepted by our Maker; I doubt not his infinite mercy; but can it be accepted by our own nature? Can our nature be purified by it? Can the tears of that dark hour of selfish sorrow, or the awful insensibility which no tear comes to relieve, — can either of them purge away from the bosom the stains of a life of sin? Let us never make the fearful experiment! Let us not go down to the last tremendous scene of life, — there, amidst pain and distraction, with the work of life to do! Let us not have to acquire peace from very terror, and hope from very despair; let us not thus trust ourselves to a judgment, "that will render unto us according to our deeds"; that will render — mark the explanation — "to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life; but tribulation and anguish to every soul that doeth evil."

III. From these views of our subject, drawn from Scripture and reason, let me, in the third and last place, refer to a no less decisive consideration which is independent of them; a consideration fully borne out by melancholy facts.

It is this: that every man will die very much as he lives: I mean, that in his character, his habits of feeling, he will. There is not this wide difference between the living world and the dying world which is generally supposed. Character, as I have contended, and as we all see, indeed, is not formed in a moment; it cannot, upon any known law or principle, — it cannot, but in contradiction to every known law and principle, be changed in a moment. Christianity has introduced no law in subversion of the great laws of experience, and rational motive, and moral action, or of its own established principles. Its doctrine of conversion is only misunderstood when it is supposed to provide a briefer and easier way of preparation for heaven, than watching and striving, and persevering in virtue, and patient continuance in well-doing. I say, therefore, and repeat the certain and solemn truth, that every man will die the same, — essentially the same, that he has lived.

For the correctness of this conclusion, I have soon to refer to a single, and, as it seems to me, momentous fact. But in the mean time, let me remark that there is one question here which I view with a kind of apprehension I scarcely know how to express; with almost a dread, for once, to ask what the simple truth is.

My brethren, we are sometimes called upon to pray for a change of heart in the sinful and negligent man, as he is drawing nigh, in horror and agony, his last hour! It is an awful situation even to him who only ministers at that dying bed. What shall he *do?* — What *can* be done? — I have asked myself. Shall I discourage prayer, even in the uttermost extremity? Can I, when I hear from those lips that are soon to be sealed in death the pathetic entreaty, "O, pray!" — can I refuse to pray? I do not; I cannot. Prayer is our duty; events are with God. But I must say, I will

say, — I will tell the negligent man beforehand, what I fear. I fear, I do fear, that such praying is nothing better than the supplication of our terror and despair! I fear that it is altogether an irrational and unauthorized praying! I fear that it is like praying that guilt, and even a whole life of it, may feel no enduring remorse, that sin may not be followed by sorrow, that vice may leap at once to the rewards of virtue, that the sword which a man has plunged into his bosom may not wound him, or that the envenomed draught he has taken may not poison! I fear that it is as if we should take our station on the banks of the mighty river, that is pouring its accumulated waters into the ocean, and pray that they may turn back to their fountain-head; or as if we should gaze upon the descending sun in heaven, and pray that he may stand still in his course! I tremble with a strange misgiving, as if it were a praying, not to God, but against God!

For what *is* this prayer? It cannot harm us to make the inquiry now, before that crisis comes. What *is* this prayer? It *is* a prayer that the flow of moral habits may turn back to its source; that the great course of moral causes and effects may all be stopped; that the great laws of the moral universe may all be suspended. It *is* praying against many a solemn declaration of Holy Writ. And will it, — I ask, — will the prayer be heard? Again I tremble at that question; again my misgivings come over me; I ask, — but I know not what to answer. I know in fact, — I may conjecture, and hope, — but I *know* of no answer to that awful question, unless it be in this more awful language. "Be not deceived," — it sounds like a warning in my ear, — "be not deceived; God is not mocked"; — man's indulgence may flatter him; plausible systems of his own devising may encourage him to venture his soul upon an easier way of

salvation; and weaker bands than those of almighty justice might have been escaped, but "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth," — not what he wishes, when the seeds of sin are implanted, and have sprung up, have grown to maturity, — I cannot read it so, — but "whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

Tell me not the oft-repeated tale of a death-bed repentance. I turn to it an incredulous ear. What does it amount to, even when it comes with the kindest testimony of partial affection? Alas! it is doubtful, even in its utmost latitude, and in the moment when it claims our utmost sympathy. For what is it? It is, that the subject of this charitable judgment was willing to die, when to die was inevitable; that he sought for pardon, when he felt that he must be pardoned or perish in his sins; that he prayed, but it was when *atheists* have prayed; that he hoped, — ah! he hoped, when it had become too terrible to despair!

And now what is the result? What is it that the issue of all this fearful, I cannot call it flattering, experience tells us? What is the fact, on which this solemn conclusion concerning the inefficacy of a death-bed repentance rests? In many cases it is revealed only in another world, and is beyond our scrutiny. But when it is known, I beg it may be solemnly considered what it is, and what is its bearing on the hopes of a death-bed repentance. The result is, — and I speak, let it be repeated, of a fact, — the result is almost without exception, in cases where the subject of such experience recovers, that he returns to his old habits of living, without any, or any but a very slight and temporary change. In many such instances, where the experience has been very bright and convincing, the individual retains no recollection of any thing he said, or was supposed to have felt. It was all a delirium. The moral state, as well as the mental state,

was all delirium. And there is too much reason to fear that all such experience is a moral delirium, at best. — I would not willingly disturb, for one moment, the peace of a fond and anxious friendship. I will not speak of the state of those who are dead; but I must speak of the dangers of those who are living. And surely, if there are any, this side of the retributions of eternity, who could most fearfully warn you not to postpone religion to a dying hour, it would be those who have hung with anxious watchings around the last hours of the disobedient and irreligious, and have trembled, and prayed, and wept for their welfare!

My friends, I have only time to present to you and to myself one practical question,—*Are we habitually ready to die?* The question, my brethren, is not whether we expect to be ready at some future time. It is not whether we mean to be ready. It is not whether we are making the most solemn promises to ourselves that we will, some time, set about the preparation for that great hour. But the question is, Are we ready for it now? Are we habitually ready? Are we convinced that we are to be judged, not by some imaginary life which we intend, and intend, and for ever intend to lead, and which we never do lead, because we are always intending it, — are we convinced, I say, that we are to be judged, not by that imaginary life which we are for ever intending to lead, but by the life which we are now actually living? Have we given up the folly of expecting to do any thing in future, which we will not do now; of expecting to do that in sickness, which we cannot do in health; of expecting to do that in death, which we cannot do in life? Are we doing just as much to prepare as if the judgment were to depend on what we are doing, — for it is to depend on what we are doing, and doing, and doing, through the whole of life, — as much, I say, as if the judgment were to depend on these

hourly deeds which we are now performing, on these momentary feelings which we are now cherishing? If not, then there ought to be a revolution in our lives, — call it conversion, regeneration, a change of heart, I care not by what name, — but I say that there ought to be a revolution in our lives, of such magnitude and moment that the eternal judgment only can declare it! Are we, then, habitually ready to die? If not habitually, we never are, for religion is a habit. If not habitually, if not, at least, habitually *making* ourselves ready, there is reason to fear that we never shall be; for life — do you not perceive? — is a tissue of thoughts, purposes, and feelings, which is growing stronger as it lengthens, so that the disinclination to prepare for death is growing every moment, while every moment the time for it lessens.

There is a vague notion, — for it is the hope of all that death will not break into the midst of life, — a vague notion, with many, of retiring in advancing years from the cares and business of life to make this preparation, which involves great and hazardous mistake. They seem to think that the heart will become pure and spiritual and heavenly, as the state of life becomes quiet and free from the urgency of worldly cares. Delusive expectation! — as if all growth in nature were not most vigorous amidst calm and silence: as if, in like manner, the rooted passions of the soul were not likely to grow stronger and more stubborn amidst the silence and quietude of declining years? What is the fact? Did you ever *see* selfishness, or avarice, or a worldly mind, lose its accustomed power in such circumstances? On the contrary, we know, — who has not witnessed sad and striking instances of it? — we know, that nothing is more common, than for avarice and worldliness to find strength in leisure and freedom in retirement; that they fix a stronger

grasp upon the decaying faculties, and fling their icy bonds over the soul amidst the winter of age. As well might the Ethiopian change his complexion, by retiring from the scorching sun to his shaded hut; as soon might the leopard lose his spots, barely by plunging into the solitudes of the wilderness, when the flood could not wash them away. — The waters of death are not waters of ablution, but rather do they give the coloring and complexion to our destiny. They are not a slow and oblivious stream; but rather a rushing torrent, that bears us away before we are aware. Death comes suddenly to all. It does break sooner or later into the midst of life. It comes at a time when we think not. It comes, not when all our plans are ready for it; not with harbingers and prophecies and preparations; not with a heart-thrilling message, saying, "Set thy house in order, for this year thou shalt die"; no voice is in the infectious breath of the air that brings contagion and death with it; no coming step startles us when disease is approaching; no summoning hand knocks at the gate of life, when its last dread foe is about to enter its dark and guarded passages; no monitory conviction within says, "This month, this week, I shall die!" No, it comes at a time when we think not; it comes upon an unprepared hour, unless our life be preparation; it finds us with all our faults, with all our sins, about us; it finds us that which life has made us, — finds us such as the very action, habit, and spirit of life have made us, — and bids us die such as we lived!

Who of *you* will meet his end when he expects it? Perhaps not one. Or, if you should, how solemn a message would you address to the living! Who of us has, in our own apprehension, been brought to such a crisis, but has had thoughts which no language can utter on this momentous concern? We felt that then was not the time to pre-

pare. "O, not now, — not here!" is the language of the dying man, as with broken utterance, and the failing and faltering breath of life, he testifies his last conviction, — "not now, not here, is the place or the time to prepare for death!" And he feels, too, that all which the world contains vanishes into nothing, compared with this preparation! Are we, then, prepared, — not by a preternatural or extravagant state of feeling, not by glooms, nor by raptures, nor by any assurance, nor by any horror of mind, — but by the habitual and calm discharge of our duty, by labors of kindness, by the spirit of devotion, by a temper of mind kindred to that heaven which we hope to enter? Are we thus ready, every day, every hour? On the exchange, in the office, in the study, in the house and by the way, in the workshop and in the field, are we ever ready? "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: — and if he shall come in the second watch, or in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."

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"TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR."

By S. GILMAN, D. D.

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"TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR."

It is worthy of remark that this solemn command was announced by the founder of the Gospel himself. He, whose errand on earth was to publish glad tidings, whose wisdom was divine, whose language was eloquence, whose pretensions were asserted by miracles, and who was conscious that he spake with undeniable authority, with irresistible conviction, and with matchless persuasion, nevertheless thought proper to leave to his disciples a fair exercise of their judgment and liberty of conscience, and though he had a right to command their implicit assent to every word he uttered, yet humbly and generously cautioned them to *take heed how they heard.*

Such, Readers, is the manner in which the Gospel ever proposes itself for your reception. It comes to you as reasonable creatures; as thinking beings; as men, who not only have souls to be saved, but who are expected to take some interest, and even some share in their own salvation. This command of our Saviour is indeed encouraging. It leads us to set a value on our own souls;

it allows us the delightful privilege of searching our ground as we go, and knowing that we are safe. In short, it is just such a command as might have been expected to be given to candidates for that heaven, where thought, and reason, and liberty, and happiness, are boundless and unshackled. Suffer me, therefore, to enter upon a full illustration of the brief title of this tract, and to exhibit to your attentive reflections a compendium of the duties of those, whose privilege and blessing it is to be regular hearers of the gospel.

In the first place, *before* visiting the house of God, there should be, on the part of hearers, a due preparation of the heart. The most general and fatal danger existing on this subject is, that the periodical and frequent recurrence of public worship is liable to render it too much a mere matter of habit. The Sabbath comes round, and silently surprises you in the midst of your busy career; perhaps the eagerness and impetuosity of your pursuits impart to the mind an impulse, which causes it to carry along its worldly thoughts and feelings into the consecrated day; or, if you are able from circumstances to resist or avoid these influences, yet the approaching hour of worship awakens no lively feelings within you, because it has approached so often before. Take heed, therefore, lest you go to the temple like thoughtless automatons, rather than like those worshipers, who should worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Again, there are some who do not exactly go into the house of God without a motive, but from a low, improper, inadequate motive. Some would rush away from the tedium and loneliness of their own thoughts at home;

some profess that their motive is to maintain the order of society; some would go for a mere intellectual treat; some are drawn by the hope of indulging a restless, vague curiosity, or a gazing speculation. Let none of these pretexts, however specious, or however adapted to your perverted inclinations, hide from your eyes the real objects for which the Sabbath was instituted, for which God's temple was erected, and for which the Gospel is regularly dispensed. Let your main and prevailing intentions be, the worship of the Creator in acts of prayer and praise, and your own spiritual edification from the instructions you may hear.

But there are others, who would seem to acknowledge very correct and and proper *motives* for going to public worship, who yet fail in cultivating a right tone of their *affections*. They do not hesitate to carry into the sanctuary a soul tinged with the feelings and passions of the world. Forgetting that God requires the service of the whole heart, they go thither, meditating on their secular plans and projects, or with loose and wandering hearts, or with an unforgiving spirit against their brother, or with the conscious leaven of habitual sinful indulgence, or inflated with pride, or fluttering with vanity, or affected with other symptoms of an undevout and frivolous spirit. These individuals perhaps *try* to worship God, and to derive benefit from his sanctuary; but their service is disjointed, imperfect, unacceptable. Their hearts are away, their hearts are not there. Now, in order to prevent these melancholy and dangerous disqualifications for a pure and perfect worship, send your hearts before you, my brethren, to the sanctuary of God. There let them rest awhile in his presence, and become refreshed

from the toils and fatigues of life. There let them catch the fervor of deep devotion, the rapture of sincere gratitude, the sweetness of low humility, the calm absence of passion, and the beauty of holiness. Consider that you are going into the presence of Him, without whose will you would have been nothing; that you are going to spend one hour of your being with Him who gave you your *whole* being; that you are about to break off the thread of your usual pursuits, and bring the little sacrifice to him, who holds and preserves the very thread of your existence. Is your heart wandering? Beware, for there is the Searcher of hearts. Is passion raging within your breast? Beware, for there is One, who hath said, Vengeance is mine alone. Is indifference chilling your soul? Beware, for there is One, who taught your very blood to glow and riot along your veins, and who has a right to demand some few pulsations especially for himself. These, and such as these, are the preparations of your heart for public worship, and though it is impossible to enumerate all the various kinds which are necessary to entering on an acceptable service, since different individuals require different directions according to their different growth in grace, and spiritual attainments, yet there is one remaining preparation, which may not, must not be forgotten; and that is, the revolving in your minds of the deep and unutterable obligations under which you lie to Jesus Christ. But for him, you would have known nothing of the worship of God. But for him, you would have been even now grovelling before the shrine of an idol. But for him, the path of duty would have lain like a dark and uncertain track before you. But for him, the grave would have terminated all your prospects, and that

bright hope of heaven, which throws so precious a lustre over the blackest spots of life, would never have cheered your mental vision. Therefore, never think of putting your foot on the threshold of the sanctuary, unless you bear along with you the cross of Christ. It is not enough to go as created beings — as men — as dependents on God — go as the subjects of redemption, as the heirs of salvation — go as disciples of Christ, and carry with you the hopes, the trust, the spirit, the hearts, of *Christians*.

In the second place, the *understanding* must take its part in preparing the hearer of the Gospel for the execution of the spirit of our Lord's command. A minister of the Gospel, as an ambassador of Christ, has a right to expect that his hearers be enlightened, as far as their opportunities and capacities will allow. *Search the Scriptures*, says our Lord and Master. This fixes the duty of hearers beyond dispute. The Scriptures are in the hands of every one. It is impossible that you can enter into the full spirit of public worship, unless your minds and hearts are thoroughly imbued by those grand representations of the character of the Deity, of the actions of Christ, and of the nature of man, which are contained in the Bible. No man ever loved the Bible, who did not love public worship; and it may be asserted, without hesitation, that a frequent absence from public worship has always been preceded and caused by a disrelish for, and neglect of the Bible. The soul, as it habitually applies to that sacred reservoir, is filled with the most sublime ideas, is instructed as to the most important relations in which mankind can be placed, and, laboring with feelings of obligation, of awe, and of love, it naturally resorts to the house of God as to its most appropriate scene of action and enjoyment.

Moreover, without a considerable acquaintance with the Scriptures, it is impossible to gather all that edification, and to derive all that benefit, which the lessons of the preacher may be calculated to impart. If his sermons, as they ought to be, are principally founded on Scripture, if his arguments are mainly drawn from Scripture, if his illustrations are frequently borrowed from the same source, and especially, if his own mind be, as it ought to be, so completely imbued with Scripture, as unconsciously to make numberless allusions to it, to weave its phraseology throughout his discourses, and to exhibit in all his performances its whole spirit and impress, — how can his hearers understand, or profit by, or appreciate, or relish his instructions, if they are ignorant of that sacred volume, which is the very well spring of his own most valuable thoughts, the treasure from which he extracts all his riches?

But further: although a familiar acquaintance with the Bible on the part of his hearers be a most gratifying and encouraging circumstance to the preacher, yet perhaps it is not all that, in the present enlightened and inquiring age, he has a right to expect. The time predicted by Daniel has arrived, when knowledge is increased, and many run to and fro. Religious knowledge especially is within the reach of every hand. Books, which explain the difficulties, illustrate the meaning, and enforce the tendency of the scriptures, everywhere abound. If, with all these advantages, a congregation be still ignorant, unenlightened, and unthinking, is there no danger that their minister will sink down to a corresponding standard? But if the standard of religious knowledge be high among his flock, how great is the stimulus for him to rise even

beyond it, and how shameful if he be destitute of the sacred ambition of making himself fit to lead the reflections of accomplished, well-furnished, and meditative minds, who are willing to put themselves under his instructions! How gladly would he toil, and rob his midnights of their sleep, and with what elevated delight would he appear in the temple, as the Christian teacher of hearers, whom he knows to be habitually employed in reflecting on the most important subjects, in searching the Scriptures with unbiassed and independent minds, in frequent and friendly religious conversations with each other, and, above all, in the exercise of the dearest privilege of Christians, a privilege so explicitly chartered and sanctioned in the Saviour's precept before us, the privilege of thinking for themselves!

We find the hearer arrived, at length, in the house of God; and we are now naturally led to inquire into his duties at that sacred place. These duties arise from a twofold relation; viz: that in which hearers stand towards God, and that in which they stand towards their pastor. It is true, there are duties which, at the same time, they owe to themselves; but these are so closely interwoven with both the other kinds, that I trust they will be sufficiently explained and illustrated as we go along.

First, there are peculiar duties in the sanctuary, arising from your relation to God. I do not mean to enforce the superstitious idea that God resides more in one place than another, nor that there is an inherent sacredness in particular edifices, or localities, apart from the associations to which the purposes they are devoted to give rise in the mind. But all this makes no difference in the case. It will do no good to run such fine distinctions here. It is

true that by assembling together with the professed purpose of worshipping God, you do not thereby affect *his* unalterable attributes, nor confine his universally extended presence to the point or spot where you are. But though God be still unchanged, yet by assembling at a place of worship, *your* relations to him are changed. In the same manner as in a ship on the ocean, though the shore stands by itself in an eternal and unchangeable position, yet is it often of the most tremendous importance to the passengers whether the ship is directing her course to or from the shore. So is it with you in the house of prayer. In spite of metaphysical sophistries, you virtually make that place the abode of the living God, when you go and worship around his altar; and though the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, yet there is capacity enough for his residence in a congregation of humble hearts, that assemble to breathe out their pious vows, and lay themselves open to the endearing and enkindling influences of his presence. In such a congregation he will, sooner or later, by known or by unknown means, on particular individuals, or on the whole assemblage, shed forth some especial manifestations of himself. Now it is from the possibility, I do not say probability, nor even certainty, though I might urge both with some confidence; I say it is from the bare possibility that such effects as have just been described may take place, that your duties as worshippers arise. If there is the least hope that you will please and honor God, and draw forth only some slight exhibitions of his grace, by your worship; and if that worship will be more ardent, and consequently more effectual, by the example and animation of numbers, it follows that God *is* there, that God *is* there, in a different

sense from that in which he is elsewhere present. What then are the duties arising from this new and sublime relation? They are few, direct, and simple. The whole heart must be engaged. Devotion must be considered a serious business. The songs which you sing must not so much please the ear, as waft your thoughts to heaven. The prayers which are offered in your behalf must not be listened to with a curious, or undevout, or admiring spirit; but a reverent assent must be given in your minds to all their sentiments in which you can conscientiously join, while at the same time your tenacious endeavors are still keeping the idea of God's immediate presence in bright and lively colors before you.

But there are a few duties arising from the relation of hearers to their preacher, on which it may be proper to dwell. Duty both to yourselves and him requires that you give him your attention. Duty to yourselves — for how can any lasting improvement be expected or hoped from instructions which fall upon dull, or indifferent, or averted ears? How can the heart be touched if the thoughts are wandering to the ends of the earth? How can the understanding be enlightened or enlarged, if the attention be inanimate or relaxed? Duty to your pastor — for with what heart can he labor in preparation for his sacred task, and for your service — what encouragement can he find in searching for the most important subjects, in revolving them with patient labor and care, and in arranging his thoughts in such a method, and clothing them in such language, as shall make the deepest and most beneficial impression on your minds, if, after all, he is to waste his words in air, and to receive only the cold consolation that he has done *his* duty? No. Animate

and cheer him, and make him grateful by the attention you bestow on his services, and the interest you take in them; and, with the blessing of God, there is nothing he will not do, or try to do, for your religious improvement and eternal welfare.

Akin to this subject is that of a constant and punctual attendance on public worship. The same reasons why you should give your pastor attention while there, operate with equal force to induce you to wait on his ministrations. But stronger and higher reasons than these exist for a punctual attendance upon them — reasons that do not lie between you and your mortal pastor, but between your God and you. In this view of the subject, it is the duty of a Christian congregation to make no slight efforts to give their attendance on the house of prayer with habitual frequency, since that zeal is not of a very high order, which requires the excitement of a pleasant day, or sturdy health, or perfect convenience, to draw it away from the indolent fireside or piazza, to spend an hour around the consecrated altar. No reasonable preacher, as far as himself is concerned, would demand of his hearers any greater exertions to come and join and animate him in his sacred services, than his hearers themselves are willing to make every day, in order to arrive at the scene of their worldly business, or to comply with an invitation to a neighbor's house. But enough of this.

Next to strict attention, a listening congregation owe to their pastor an indulgent candor. It must be allowed that his duties are arduous, his difficulties great. It is scarcely an excuse for him that his week has been interrupted, or himself visited by sickness; that his spirits have been exhausted or depressed, and his moods unfa-

vorable for due preparation. The solemn seventh day arrives with its great and inexorable demands. And even under the best circumstances, how many are the tastes which he must satisfy in order to render his services universally acceptable! How many are there who prefer an essay to a sermon! How many who will allow nothing to be evangelical or rational which does not exactly conform to a preconceived standard of their own! Then, again, in the region of religious opinions his difficulties become mountainous. Thought is so free in this free country, human authority is so weak, and the Bible so open to all, and yet confessedly abounding with so many difficulties, that a religious congregation, unanimous upon all points of belief, is perhaps a thing unknown. Now, though every individual ought to take heed how he hears, and should shudder at receiving with approbation any sentiment that may endanger his own salvation, yet how slow he should be in denouncing what may be the result of prayers, and labors, and tears, on the part of the preacher — how slow he should be in setting up his own infallibility against his preacher's liberty of conscience! If good men of all persuasions shall meet together in heaven, why cannot a few meet together and bear with each other in a temple on earth? And why cannot the following tests, along with the Bible, be applied to a course of preaching? — Is it serious? Is it practical? Are you growing better under it? Do you hear much which you know to be truth, though all does not exactly tally with your own honest and sincere belief? In short, are your heart, your life, and your onward tendency, under this preaching growing more and more Christian, and more and more heavenly? These questions you owe to your preacher,

and though it is scrutinizing and trying, this alone is the candor which, if faithful and conscientious, he would implore.

But there is still a class of duties appertaining to the Christian hearer and worshipper, which are not so immediately connected with attendance on the ministrations of the pulpit. The primary duty of a religious congregation, apart from their Sabbath worship, is to preserve unbroken peace and harmony among each other; to be tender of each other's rights, and privileges, and feelings; to receive with indulgence, and discuss with candor, and execute with alacrity, every project and measure which may tend to promote the good order, welfare, and edification of the church and congregation.

In their intercourse with their pastor, they will treat him as their religious friend, candidly laying open their doubts and difficulties, but not assuming over him the office of jealous spies, or spiritual dictators. They will advise his inexperience, or ignorance, or incaution; they will be charitable towards his failings; they will be tender of his reputation, since, if his character is gone his influence is gone; they will defend him in those things wherein God and his own conscience would defend him; and they will especially remember that his office is no light or easy task; that it has difficulties like other tasks, temptations like other pursuits, and that the office itself does not consecrate the man, but it is the man whose duty it is to magnify the office.

One more injunction remains for this department of your duty. It will not be enough that you prepare your hearts, or furnish your understandings, or task your attention for a right reception of the ministrations of the pul-

pit. All this you might do, and yet not carry out the execution of the command to take heed how you hear. One thing more is requisite. Will you, when you leave the house of God, leave behind you all that you may have there gained? Shall your religion evaporate when the dews of the Sabbath descend? Oh no! Let it not be so. Make not your religious ceremonies a mockery, a pastime, a dramatic thing of yesterday. Carry forth into the world the good impressions you may receive. Let the light which falls on you from the sanctuary be reflected around, when you go into the world abroad. Silence the cutting question of gainsayers — "What do ye more than others?" And believe me, the hour will come, when, on looking back upon your fleeting life, and exclaiming that time is nothing, the only exception you can make to the exclamation will be, your well-spent Sabbaths. Yes, your well-spent Sabbaths you will feel have not been nothing; and while your life is gliding from under you, you will grasp at them as at the golden links which begin the chain of a blissful eternity. Readers! rivet these chains so strongly, while they are yet in your hands, that they shall not break when you have no other support. Fasten them at the foot of the cross, and they shall be linked again at the throne of God.

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A

DISCOURSE

ON THE CHURCH.

BY WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D. D.

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DISCOURSE

ON THE CHURCH.

MATTHEW, VII, 21—27.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it **fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.**

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, **and it fell; and great was the fall of it.**

These words, which form the conclusion of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, teach a great truth, namely, that there is but one thing essential in religion, and this is the doing of God's will, the doing of those sayings or precepts of Christ, which constitute the substance of that memorable discourse. We learn, that it will avail us nothing to call Christ, Lord, Lord, to profess ourselves his disciples, to hear his words, to teach in his name, to take our

place in his church, or even to do wonderful works or miracles in attestation of his truth, if we neglect to cherish the spirit and virtues of his religion. God heeds not what we say, but what we are and what we do. The subjection of our wills to the divine; the mortification of sensual and selfish propensities; the cultivation of supreme love to God, and of universal justice and charity towards our neighbour; this, this is the very essence of religion; this, alone, places us on a rock; this is the end, the supreme and ultimate good, and is to be prized and sought above all other things.

This is a truth as simple as it is grand. The child can understand it; and yet men, in all ages, have contrived to overlook it; have contrived to find substitutes for purity of heart and life; have hoped by some other means to commend themselves to God, to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Forms, creeds, churches, the priesthood, the sacraments, these and other things, have been exalted into supremacy. The grand and only qualification for heaven, that which in itself is heaven, the virtue and the spirit of Jesus Christ, has been obscured, depreciated; whilst assent to certain mysteries or union with certain churches has been thought the narrow way that leads to life. I have not time in a single discourse to expose all the delusions which have spread on this subject. I shall confine myself to one, which is not limited to the past, but too rife in our own times.

There has always existed, and still exists, a disposition to attach undue importance to 'the church' which a man belongs to. To be a member of the "true church," has been insisted on as essential to human salvation. Multitudes have sought comfort, and not seldom found their

ruin, in the notion that they were embraced in the motherly arms of 'the true church,' for with this they have been satisfied. Professed Christians have fought about 'the church' as if it were a matter of life and death. The Roman Catholic shuts the gate of Heaven on you, because you will not enter his 'church.' Among the Protestants are those, who tell you, that the promises of Christianity do not belong to you, be your character what it may, unless you receive the Christian ordinances from the ministers of their church. Salvation is made to flow through a certain priesthood, through an hereditary order, through particular rites administered by consecrated functionaries. Even among denominations, in which such exclusive claims are not set up, you will still meet the idea, that a man is safer in their particular church than elsewhere; so that something distinct from Christian purity of heart and life is made the way of salvation.

This error I wish to expose. I wish to show, that Christ's spirit, Christ's virtue, or 'the doing of the Sermon on the Mount,' is the great end of our religion, the only essential thing, and that all other things are important only as ministering to this. I know, indeed, that very many acknowledge the doctrine now expressed. But too often their conviction is not deep and living, and it is impaired by superstitious notions of some mysterious saving influence in the church or in some other foreign agency. To meet these erroneous tendencies, I shall not undertake to prove in a formal way, by logical process, the supreme importance, blessedness, and glory of righteousness, of sanctity, of love towards God and man, or to prove that nothing else is indispensable. This truth shines by its own light. It runs through the whole New

Testament; and is a gospel written in the soul by a divine hand. To vindicate it against the claims set up for the church, nothing is needed but to offer a few plain remarks in the order in which they rise up of themselves to my mind.

I begin with the remark, that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said nothing about the Church; nor do we find him or his disciples laying down any where a definite plan for its organization, or a ritual for its worship. Nor ought this to surprise us. It was the very thing to be expected in such a religion as Christianity. Judaism was intended to educate a particular nation, half civilized, and surrounded with the grossest idolatry, and accordingly it hedged them in by multiplied and rigid forms. But Christianity proposes as its grand aim, to spread the inward spiritual worship of God through all nations, in all stages of society, ander all varieties of climate, government and condition, and such a religion cannot be expected to confine itself to any particular outward shape. Especially when we consider, that it is destined to endure through all ages, to act on all, to blend itself with new forms of society and with the highest improvements of the race, it cannot be expected to ordain an immutable mode of administration, but must leave its modes of worship and communion to conform themselves silently and gradually to the wants and progress of humanity. The rites and arrangements which suit one period, lose their significance or efficiency in another. The forms, which minister to the mind now, may fetter it hereafter, and must give place to its free unfolding. A system wanting this freedom and flexibleness would carry strong proof in itself of not having been intended for universality. It is one proof of Christ's

having come to "inherit all nations" that he did not institute for all nations and all times a precise machinery of forms and outward rules, that he entered into no minute legislation as to the worship and government of his church, but left these outward concerns to be swayed by the spirit and progress of successive ages. Of consequence, no particular order of the church can be essential to salvation. No church can pretend, that its constitution is defined and ordained in the scriptures so plainly and undeniably, that whoever forsakes it gives palpable proof of a spirit of disobedience to God. All churches are embraced by their members with equal religious reverence, and this assures us, that in all, God's favor may be equally obtained.

It is worthy of remark, that from the necessity of the case, the church assumed at first a form which it could not long retain. It was governed by the Apostles who had founded it, men who had known Christ personally, and received his truth from his lips, and witnessed his resurrection, and were enriched above all men by the miraculous illuminations and aids of his spirit. These presided over the church with an authority peculiar to themselves, and to which none after them could, with any reason, pretend. They understood 'the mind of Christ,' as none could do but those, who had enjoyed so long and close an intimacy with him; and not only were they sent forth with miraculous powers, but by imposition of their hands similar gifts of the Spirit were conferred on others. This presence of inspired Apostles and supernatural powers gave to the primitive church obvious and important distinctions, separating it widely from the form which it was afterwards to assume. Of this we have a

remarkable proof in a passage of Paul, in which he sets before us the offices or functions exercised in the original church. "God hath set in the church apostles, prophets, teachers, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."* Now, of all these endowments or offices, one only, that of teacher, remains in our day. The apostles, the founders and heroes of the primitive church, with their peculiar powers, have vanished, leaving as their representatives their writings to be studied alike by all. Teachers remain, not because they existed in the first age, but because their office, from its nature and from the condition of human nature, is needed still. The office, however, has undergone an important change. At first the christian teacher enjoyed immediate communication with the apostles and received miraculous aids, and thus enjoyed means of knowledge possessed by none of his successors. The Christian minister now can only approach the apostles as other men do, that is, through the gospels and epistles, which they have left us; and he has no other aid from above in interpreting them than every true Christian enjoys. The promise of the Holy Spirit, that greatest of promises, is made without distinction to every man, of every office or rank, who perseveringly implores the divine help, and this establishes an essential equality among all. Whether teachers are to continue in the brighter ages which prophecy announces, is rendered doubtful by a very striking prediction of the times of the Messiah. "In those days," saith the Lord, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neigh-

* 1 Cor. xii, 28.

bour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest."* Is it possible that any man, with a clear comprehension of the peculiarity of the primitive church, can look back to this as an immutable form and rule, can regard any church form as essential to salvation, can ascribe to outward ordinances, so necessarily fluctuating, an importance to be compared with that which belongs to the immutable everlasting distinctions of holiness and virtue?

The church, as at first constituted, presents interesting and beautiful aspects. It was not a forced and arbitrary, but free spontaneous union. It grew out of the principles and feelings of human nature. Our nature is social. We cannot live alone. We cannot shut up any great feeling in our hearts. We seek for others to partake it with us. The full soul finds at once relief and strength in sympathy. This is especially true in religion, the most social of all our sentiments, the only universal bond on earth. In this law of our nature, the Christian church had its origin. Christ did not establish it in a formal way. If you consult the New Testament, you do not find Jesus or his apostles setting about the task of forming an artificial organization of the first disciples. Read in the book of Acts, the simple, touching narratives of the union of the first converts. They were of one heart and one soul. They could not be kept asunder. The new truth melted them into one mass; knit them into one body. In their mutual love, they could not withhold from one another their possessions, but had all things in common. Blessed

* Jeremiah, xxxi, 33, 34.

unity! a type of that oneness and harmony, which a purer Christianity is to spread through all nations. Among those early converts, the most gifted and enlightened were chosen to be teachers in public assemblies. To these assemblies the brotherhood repaired with eagerness, to hear expositions of the new faith, to strengthen one another's loyalty to Christ, and to be open witnesses of him in the world. In their meetings they were left very much to follow the usages of the synagogue, in which they had been brought up; so little did Christianity trouble itself about forms. How simple, how natural this association! It is no mystery. It grew out of the plainest wants of the human heart. The religious sentiment, the spirit of love towards God and man, awakened afresh by Christ, craved for a new union through which to find utterance and strength. And shall this church union, the growth of the Christian spirit, and so plainly subordinate to it, usurp its place, or in any way detract from its sole sufficiency, from its supreme unrivalled glory?

The church, according to its true idea and purpose, is an association of sincere, genuine followers of Christ; and at first, this idea was, in a good degree, realized. The primitive disciples were drawn to Christ by conviction. They met together and confessed him, not from usage, fashion, or education, but in opposition to all these. In that age, profession and practice, the form and the spirit, the reality and the outward signs of religion went together. But with the growth of the church, its life declined; its great idea was obscured; the name remained, and sometimes little more than the name. It is a remarkable fact, that the very spirit to which Christianity is most hostile, the passion for power,

dominion, pomp, and pre-eminence, struck its deepest roots in the church. The church became the very stronghold of the lusts and vices, which Christianity most abhors. Accordingly, its history is one of the most melancholy records of past times. It is sad enough to read the bloodstained annals of worldly empires; but when we see the spiritual kingdom of Christ, a prey for ages to usurping popes, prelates, or sectarian chiefs, inflamed with bigotry and theological hate and the lust of rule, and driven by these fires of hell to grasp the temporal sword, to persecute, torture, imprison, butcher their brethren, to mix with and embitter national wars, and to convulse the whole Christian world, we experience a deeper gloom, and are more tempted to despair of our race. History has not a darker page, than that which records the persecutions of the Albigenses, or the horrors of the inquisition. And when we come to later times, the church wears any thing rather than holiness inscribed on her front. How melancholy to a Christian, the history lately given us by Ranke, of the reaction of Catholicism against Protestantism. Throughout, we see the ecclesiastical powers resorting to force as the grand instrument of conversion; thus proving their alliance not with heaven, but with earth and hell. If we take broad views of the church in any age or land, how seldom do we see the prevalence of true sanctity! How many of its ministers preach for lucre or display, preach what they do not believe, or deny their doctrines in their lives! How many congregations are there, made up in a great degree of worldly men and women, who repair to the house of God from usage, or for propriety's sake, or from a vague notion of being

saved, not from thirst for the divine spirit, not from a fulness of heart, which longs to pour itself forth in prayer and praise! Such is the church. We are apt, indeed, to make it an abstraction, or to separate it in our thoughts from the individuals who compose it; and thus it becomes to us a holy thing, and we ascribe to it strange powers. Theologians speak of it as a unity, a mighty whole, one and the same in all ages; and in this way the imagination is cheated into the idea of its marvellous sanctity and grandeur. But we must separate between the theory or the purpose of the church, and its actual state. When we come down to facts, we see it to be not a mysterious, immutable unity, but a collection of fluctuating, divided, warring individuals, who bring into it, too often, hearts and hands any thing but pure. Painful as it is, we must see things as they are; and so doing, we cannot but be struck with the infinite absurdity of ascribing to such a church mysterious powers, of supposing that it can confer holiness on its members, or that the circumstance of being joined to it is of the least moment in comparison with purity of heart and life.

Purity of heart and life, Christ's spirit of love towards God and man; this is all in all. This is the only essential thing. The church is important only as it ministers to this, and every church which so ministers, is a good one, no matter how, when or where it grew up, no matter whether it worship on its knees or on its feet, or whether its ministers are ordained by pope, bishop, presbyter, or people; these are secondary things, and of no comparative moment. The church which opens on heaven, is that and that only, in which the spirit of heaven dwells. The church whose worship rises to God's ear, is that and

that only, where the soul ascends. No matter whether it be gathered in cathedral or barn; whether it sit in silence or send up a hymn; whether the minister speak from carefully prepared notes, or from immediate, fervent, irrepressible suggestion. If God be loved, and Jesus Christ be welcomed to the soul, and his instructions be meekly and wisely heard, and the solemn purpose grow up to do all duty amidst all conflict, sacrifice, and temptation, then the true end of the church is answered. "This is no other than the house of God, the gate of heaven."

In these remarks, I do not mean that all churches are of equal worth. Some, undoubtedly, correspond more than others to the spirit and purpose of Christianity, to the simple usages of the primitive disciples, and to the principles of human nature. All have their superstitions and corruptions, but some are more pure than the rest; and we are bound to seek that which is purest, which corresponds most with the divine will. As far as we have power to select, we should go to the church where we shall be most helped to become devout, disinterested, and morally strong. Our salvation, however, does not depend on our finding the best church on earth, for this may be distant or unknown. Amidst diversities of administrations, there is the same spirit. In all religious societies professing Christ as their Lord, the plainest, grandest truths of religion will almost certainly be taught, and some souls may be found touched and enlightened from above. This is a plain, undeniable fact. In all sects, various as they are, good and holy men may be found; nor can we tell in which the holiest have grown up. The church then answers its end in all; for its only

end is to minister to human virtue. It is delightful to read in the records of all denominations the lives of eminent Christians, who have given up every thing for their religion, who have been faithful unto death, who have shed around them the sweet light and fragrance of Christian hope and love. We cannot then well choose amiss, if we choose the church which, as it seems to us, best represents the grand ideas of Christ, and speaks most powerfully to our consciences and hearts. This church, however, we must not choose for our brother. He differs from us probably in temperament, in his range of intellect, or in the impressions which education and habit have given him. Perhaps the worship which most quickens you and me, may hardly keep our neighbour awake. He must be approached through the heart and imagination; we through the reason. What to him is fervor passes with us for noise. What to him is an imposing form is to us vain show. Condemn him not. If in his warmer atmosphere he builds up a stronger faith in God and a more steadfast choice of perfect goodness than ourselves, his church is better to him than ours to us.

One great error in regard to churches contributes to the false estimate of them as essential to salvation. We imagine that the church, the minister, the worship can do something for us mechanically; that there are certain mysterious influences in what we call a holy place, which may act on us without our own agency. It is not so. The church and the minister can do little for us in comparison with what we must do for ourselves, and nothing for us without ourselves. They become to us blessings through our own activity. Every man must be his own priest. It is his own action, not the minis-

ter's, it is the prayer issuing from his own heart, not from another's lips, which aids him in the church. The church does him good only as by its rites, prayers, hymns, and sermons, it wakes up his spirit to think, feel, pray, praise, and resolve. The church is a help, not a force. It acts on us by rational and moral means, and not by mystical operations Its influence resembles precisely that which is exerted out of church. Its efficiency depends chiefly on the clearness, simplicity, sincerity, love and zeal with which the minister speaks to our understandings, consciences, and hearts; just as in common life we are benefited by the clearness and energy with which our friends set before us what is good and pure. The church is adapted to our free moral nature. It acts on us as rational and responsible beings, and serves us through our own efficiency. From these views we learn that the glory of the church does not lie in any particular government or form, but in the wisdom with which it combines such influences as are fitted to awaken and purify the soul. Am I asked to state more particularly what these influences are to which the church owes its efficacy? I reply that they are such as may be found in all churches, in all denominations. The first is, the character of the minister. This has an obvious, immediate, and powerful bearing on the great spiritual purpose of the church. I say his character, not his ordination. Ordination has no end but to introduce into the sacred office men qualified for its duties, and to give an impression of its importance. It is by his personal endowments, by his intellectual, moral, and religious worth, by his faithfulness and zeal, and not through any mysterious ceremony or power, that the minister enlightens and edifies the

church. What matters it, how he is ordained or set apart, if he give himself to his work in the fear of God? What matters it who has laid hands on him, or whether he stand up in surplice or drab coat? I go to church to be benefited not by hands or coats, but by the action of an enlightened and holy teacher on my mind and heart; not an overpowering, irresistible action, but such as becomes effectual through my own free thought and will. I go to be convinced of what is true, and to be warmed with love of what is good; and he who thus helps me is a true minister, no matter from what school, consistory, or ecclesiastical body he comes. He carries his commission in his soul. Do not say that his ministry has no "validity," because Rome, or Geneva, or Lambeth, or Andover, or Princeton, has not laid hands on him. What! Has he not opened my eyes to see, and roused my conscience to reprove? As I have heard him, has not my heart burned within me, and have I not, silently, given myself to God with new humility and love? Have I not been pierced by his warnings, and softened by his looks and tones of love? Has he not taught and helped me to deny myself, to conquer the world, to do good to a foe? Has he done this, and yet has his ministry no "validity?" What other validity can there be than this? If a generous friend gives me water to drink when I am parched with thirst, and I drink and am refreshed, will it do to tell me that, because he did not buy the cup at a certain licensed shop, or draw the water at a certain antiquated cistern, therefore his act of kindness is "invalid," and I am as thirsty and weak as I was before? What more can a minister, with mitre or tiara, do than help me, by wise and touching manifestations of God's

truth, to become a holier, nobler man. If my soul be made alive, no matter who ministers to me; and if not, the ordinances of the church, whether high or low, orthodox or heretical, are of no validity, so far as I am concerned. The diseased man, who is restored to health, cares little whether his physician wear wig or cowl, or receive his diploma from Paris or London; and so, to the regenerate man, it is of little moment where or by what processes he became a temple of the holy spirit.

According to these views, a minister, deriving power from his intellectual, moral, and religious worth, is one of the chief elements of a true and quickening church. Such a man will gather a true church round him; and we here learn that a Christian community is bound to do what may aid, and to abstain from what may impair, the virtue, nobleness, and spiritual energy of its minister. It should especially leave him free, should wish him to wear no restraints but those of a sense of duty. His office is to utter God's truth according to his apprehension of it, and he should be encouraged to utter it honestly, simply. He must follow his own conscience and no other. How can he rebuke prevalent error without an unawed spirit? Better that he should hold his peace than not speak from his own soul. Better that the pulpit be prostrated than its freedom be taken away. The doctrine of "instructions" in politics is of very doubtful expediency; but that instructions should issue from the congregation to the minister, we all, with one voice, pronounce wrong. The religious teacher, compelled to stifle his convictions, grows useless to his people, is shorn of his strength, loses self-respect, shrinks before his own conscience, and owes it to himself to refrain from teaching. If he be honest,

upright, and pure, worthy of trust, worthy of being a minister, he has a right to freedom; and when he uses it conscientiously, though he may err in judgment, and may give pain to judicious hearers, he has still a right to respect. There are, indeed, few religious societies which would knowingly make the minister a slave. Many err on the side of submission, and receive his doctrines with a blind, unquestioning faith. Still the members of a congregation, conscious of holding the support of their teacher in their hands, are apt to expect a cautious tenderness towards their known prejudices or judgments, which, though not regarded as servility, is very hostile to that firm, bold utterance of truth, on which the success of his ministry chiefly depends.

I have mentioned the first condition of the most useful church; it is the high character of its minister. The second is to be found in the spiritual character of its members. This, like the former, is, from the very principles of human nature, fitted to purify and save. It was the intention of Christ that a quickening power should be exerted in a church, not by the minister alone, but also by the members on one another. Accordingly we read of the "working of every part, every joint" in his spiritual body. We come together in our places of worship, that heart may act on heart; that, in the midst of the devout, a more fervent flame of piety may be kindled in our own breasts; that we may hear God's word more eagerly, by knowing that it is drunk in by thirsty spirits around us; that our own purpose of obedience may be confirmed by the consciousness that a holy energy of will is unfolding itself in our neighbors. To this sympathy the church is dedicated, and in this its highest influence is

sometimes found. To myself the most effectual church is that in which I see the signs of Christian affection in those around me, in which warm hearts are beating on every side, in which a deep stillness speaks of the absorbed soul, in which I recognise fellow-beings, who in common life have impressed me with their piety. One look from a beaming countenance, one tone in singing from a deeply moved heart, perhaps aids me more than the sermon. When nothing is said, I feel it good to be among the devout; and I wonder not that the Quakers, in some of their still meetings, profess to hold the most intimate union, not only with God, but with each other. It is not with the voice only that man communicates with man. Nothing is so eloquent as the deep silence of a crowd. A sigh, a low breathing, sometimes pours into us our neighbor's soul more than a volume of words. There is a communication more subtile than freemasonry between those who feel alike. How contagious is holy feeling! On the other hand, how freezing, how palsying is the gathering of a multitude, who feel nothing, who come to God's house without reverence, without love, who gaze around on each other as if they were assembled at a show, whose restlessness keeps up a slightly disturbing sound, whose countenances reveal no collectedness, no earnestness, but a frivolous or absent mind! The very sanctity of the place makes this indifference more chilling. One of the coldest spots on earth is a church without devotion. What is it to me, that a costly temple is set apart, by ever so many rites, for God's service, that priests who trace their lineage to apostles, have consecrated it, if I find it thronged by the worldly and undevout. This is no church to me. I go to meet, not human bodies, but

souls; and if I find them in an upper room, like that where the first disciples met, or in a shed, or in a street, there I find a church. There is the true altar, the sweet incense, the accepted priest. These all I find in sanctified souls.

True Christians give a sanctifying power, a glory, to the place of worship, where they come together. In them Christ is present and manifested in a far higher sense than if he were revealed to the bodily eye. We are apt, indeed, to think differently. Were there a place of worship in which a glory, like that which clothed Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, were to shine forth, how should we throng to it as the chosen spot on earth! How should we honor this as eminently his church! But there is a more glorious presence of Christ than this. It is Christ formed in the souls of his disciples. Christ's bodily presence does not make a church. He was thus present in the thronged streets of Jerusalem, present in the synagogues and temples; but these were not churches. It is the presence of his spirit, truth, likeness, divine love, in the souls of men which attracts and unites them into one living body. Suppose that we meet together in a place consecrated by all manner of forms, but that nothing of Christ's spirit dwells in us. With all its forms, it is a synagogue of Satan, not a church of Jesus. Christ in the hearts of men, I repeat it, is the only church bond. The Catholics, to give them a feeling of the present Saviour, adorn their temples with paintings, representing him in the most affecting scenes of his life and death; and had worship never been directed to these, I should not object to them. But there is a far higher likeness to Christ than the artist ever drew or chiseled. It exists in

the heart of his true disciple. The true disciple surpasses Raphael and Michael Angelo. The latter have given us Christ's countenance from fancy, and at best having little likeness to the mild beauty and majestic form which moved through Judea. But the disciple who sincerely conforms himself to the disinterestedness, and purity, and filial worship, and all-sacrificing love of Christ, gives us no fancied representation, but the divine lineaments of his soul, the very spirit which beamed in his face, which spoke in his voice, which attested his glory as the Son of God. The truest church is that which has, in the highest degree, this spiritual presence of our Lord, this revelation of Jesus in his followers. This is the church in which we shall find the greatest aid to our virtue, which outward institution can afford us.

I have thus spoken of the two chief elements of a living and effectual church; a pure, noble-minded minister, and faithful followers of Christ. In the preceding remarks, I have had chiefly in view particular churches, organized according to some particular forms; and I have maintained, that these are important only as ministering to Christian holiness or virtue. There is, however, a grander church, to which I now ask your attention; and the consideration of this will peculiarly confirm the lesson on which I am insisting, namely, that there is but one essential thing, true holiness, or disinterested love to God and man. There is a grander church than all particular ones, however extensive; the Church Catholic or Universal, spread over all lands, and one with the church in heaven. That all Christ's followers form one body, one fold, is taught in various passages in the New Testament. You remember the earnestness of his last prayer, 'that

they might all be one, as he and his Father are one.' Into this church, all who partake the spirit of Christ are admitted. It asks not, Who has baptised us? Whose passport we carry? What badge we wear? If 'baptised by the Holy Ghost,' its wide gates are opened to us. Within this church are joined those, whom different names have severed or still sever. We hear nothing of Greek, Roman, English churches, but of Christ's church only. My friends, this is not an imaginary union. The scriptures, in speaking of it, do not talk rhetorically, but utter the soberest truth. All sincere partakers of Christian virtue are essentially one. In the spirit which pervades them, dwells a uniting power found in no other tie. Though separated by oceans, they have sympathies strong and indissoluble. Accordingly, the clear strong utterance of one gifted, inspired Christian flies through the earth. It touches kindred chords in another hemisphere. The word of such a man as Fenelon, for instance, finds its way into the souls of scattered millions. Are not he and they of one church? I thrill with joy at the name of holy men who lived ages ago. Ages do not divide us. I venerate them more for their antiquity. Are we not one body? Is not this union something real! It is not men's coming together into one building which makes a church. Suppose that, in a place of worship, I sit so near a fellow-creature as to touch him; but that there is no common feeling between us, that the truth which moves me he inwardly smiles at as a dream of fancy; that the disinterestedness which I honor, he calls weakness or wild enthusiasm. How far apart are we, though visibly so near! We belong to different worlds. How much nearer am I to some pure, generous

spirit in anot'er continent, whose word has penetrated my heart, whose virtues have kindled me to emulation, whose pure thoughts are passing through my mind whilst I sit in the house of prayer! With which of these two have I church union?

Do not tell me that I surrender myself to a fiction of imagination, when I say, that distant Christians, that all Christians and myself, form one body, one church, just as far as a common love and piety possess our hearts. Nothing is more real than this spiritual union. There *is* one grand all-comprehending church; and if I am a Christian I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it. You may exclude me from your Roman church, your Episcopal church, and your Calvinistic church, on account of supposed defects in my creed or my sect, and I am content to be excluded. But I will not be severed from the great body of Christ. Who shall sunder me from such men as Fenelon, and Pascal, and Boromeo, from Archbishop Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, and John Howard? Who can rupture the spiritual bond between these men and myself? Do I not hold them dear? Does not their spirit, flowing out through their writings and lives, penetrate my soul? Are they not a portion of my being? Am I not a different man from what I should have been, had not these and other like spirits acted on mine? And is it in the power of synod or conclave, or of all the ecclesiastical combinations on earth, to part me from them? I am bound to them by thought and affection; and can these be suppressed by the bull of a pope or the excommunication of a council? The soul breaks scornfully these barriers, these webs of spiders, and joins itself to the great and good; and if it possess their spirit,

will the great and good, living or dead, cast it off, because it is not enrolled in this or another sect? A pure mind is free of the universe. It belongs to the church, the family of the pure in all worlds. Virtue is no local thing. It is not honorable, because born in this community or that, but for its own independent, everlasting beauty. This is the bond of the universal church. No man can be excommunicated from it but by himself, by the death of goodness in his own breast. All sentences of exclusion are vain, if he do not dissolve the tie of purity which binds him to all holy souls.

I honor the Roman Catholic church on one account; it clings to the idea of a Universal Church, though it has mutilated and degraded it. The word Catholic means Universal. Would to God, that the church which has usurped the name had understood the reality! Still Romanism has done something to give to its members the idea of their connexion with that vast spiritual community or church, which has existed in all times and spread over all lands. It guards the memory of great and holy men who in all ages have toiled and suffered for religion, asserts the honors of the heroes of the faith, enshrines them in heaven as beatified saints, converts their legends into popular literature, appoints days for the celebration of their virtues, and reveals them almost as living to the eye by the pictures in which genius has immortalized their deeds. In doing this Rome has fallen indeed into error. She has fabricated exploits for these spiritual persons, and exalted them into objects of worship. But she has also done good. She has given to her members the feeling of intimate relation to the holiest and noblest men in all preceding ages. An interesting

and often a sanctifying tie connects the present Roman Catholic with martyrs, and confessors, and a host of men whose eminent piety and genius and learning have won for them an immortality of fame. It is no mean service, thus to enlarge men's ideas and affections, to awaken their veneration for departed greatness, to teach them their connexion with the grandest spirits of all times. It was this feature of Catholicism, which most interested me in visiting Catholic countries. The services at the altar did not move, but rather pained me. But when I cast my eyes on the pictures on the walls, which placed before me the holy men of departed ages, now absorbed in devotion and lost in rapture, now enduring with meek courage and celestial hope the agonies of a painful death in defence of the truth, I was touched, and I hope made better. The voice of the officiating priest I did not hear; but these sainted dead spoke to my heart, and I was sometimes led to feel, as if an hour on Sunday spent in this communion were as useful to me, as if it had been spent in a Protestant church. These saints never rose to my thoughts as Roman Catholics. I never connected them with any particular church. They were to me living, venerable witnesses to Christ, to the power of religion, to the grandeur of the human soul. I saw what men might suffer for the truth, how they could rise above themselves, how real might become the ideas of God and a higher life. This inward reverence for the departed good helped me to feel myself a member of the church universal. I wanted no Pope or Priest to establish my unity with them. My own heart was witness enough to a spiritual fellowship. Is it not to be desired, that all our churches should have services to teach us our union with

Christ's whole body? Would not this break our sectarian chains, and awaken reverence for Christ's spirit, for true goodness under every name and form? It is not enough, to feel that we are members of this or that narrow communion. Christianity is universal sympathy and love. I do not recommend that our churches should be lined with pictures of saints. This usage must come in, if it come at all, not by recommendation, but by gradual change of tastes and feelings. But why may not the pulpit be used occasionally to give us the lives and virtues of eminent disciples in former ages? It is customary to deliver sermons on the history of Peter, John, Paul, and of Abraham and Elijah and other worthies of the old Testament; and this we do because their names are written in the Bible. But goodness owes nothing to the circumstance of its being recorded in a sacred book, nor loses its claim to grateful, reverent commemoration, because not blazoned there. Moral greatness did not die out with the apostles. Their lives were reported for this among other ends, that their virtues might be propagated to future times, and that men might spring up as worthy a place among the canonized as themselves. What I wish is, that we should learn to regard ourselves as members of a vast spiritual community, as joint heirs and fellow worshippers with the goodly company of Christian heroes who have gone before us, instead of immuring ourselves in particular churches. Our nature delights in this consciousness of vast connexion. This tendency manifests itself in the patriotic sentiment, and in the passionate clinging of men to a great religious denomination. Its true and noblest gratification is found in the deep feeling of a vital everlasting connexion with

the universal church, with the innumerable multitude of the holy on earth and in heaven. This church we shall never make a substitute for virtue.

I have spoken of the Roman Catholic Church. My great objection to this communion is, that it has fallen peculiarly into the error which I am laboring to expose in this discourse, that it has attached idolatrous importance to the institution of the church, that it virtually exalts this above Christ's spirit, above inward sanctity. Its other errors are of inferior importance. It does not offend me, that the Romanist maintains that a piece of bread, a wafer, over which a priest has pronounced some magical words, is the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. I learn indeed in this error a humbling lesson of human credulity, of the weakness of human reason; but I see nothing in it which strikes at the essential principles of reli[illegible]. When the Roman Catholic tells me, that God looks with abhorrence on all, who will not see in the consecrated wafer Christ's flesh and blood; and when he makes the reception of this, from the hands of a consecrated priest, the door into Christ's fold, then I am shocked by the dishonor he casts on God and virtue, by his debasing conceptions of our moral nature and of the Divine, and by his cruel disruption of the ties of human and christian brotherhood. How sad and strange that a man, educated under Christianity, should place religion in a church-connexion, in church-rites, should shut from God's family the wisest and the best, because they conscientiously abstain from certain outward ordinances. Is not holiness of heart and life dear to God for its own sake, dear to him without the manipulations of a priest, without the agency of a consecrated wafer? The grand

error of Roman Catholicism is its narrow church-spirit, its blind sectarianism, its exclusion of virtuous, pious men from God's favor, because they cannot eat, drink, or pray according to certain prescribed rites. Romanism has to learn, that nothing but the inward life is great and good in the sight of the Omniscient, and that all who cherish this are members of Christ's body. Romanism is any thing but what it boasts to be, the Universal Church. I am too much a Catholic to enlist under its banner.

I belong to the Universal Church; nothing shall separate me from it. In saying this, however, I am no enemy to particular churches. In the present age of the world it is perhaps best, that those, who agree in theological opinions, should worship together; and I do not object to the union of several such churches in one denomination, provided that *all* sectarian and narrow feeling be conscientiously and scrupulously resisted. I look on the various churches of Christendom with no feelings of enmity. I have expressed my abhorrence of the sectarian spirit of Rome; but in that as in all other churches, individuals are better than their creed; and amidst gross error and the inculcation of a narrow spirit noble virtues spring up, and eminent Christians are formed. It is one sign of the tendency of human nature to goodness, that it grows good under a thousand bad influences. The Romish church is illustrated by great names. Her gloomy convents have often been brightened by fervent love to God and man. Her St. Louis, and Fenelon, and Massilon, and Cheverus; her missionaries who have carried Christianity to the ends of the earth; her sisters of charity who have carried relief and solace to the most

hopeless want and pain: do not these teach us, that in the Romish Church the Spirit of God has found a home? How much, too, have other churches to boast! In the English church, we meet the names of Latimer, Hooker, Barrow, Leighton, Berkely, and Heber; in the dissenting Calvinistic church, Baxter, Howe, Watts, Doddridge, and Robert Hall; among the Quakers, George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, and our own Anthony Benezet, and John Woolman; in the Anti-trinitarian church, John Milton, John Locke, Samuel Price, and Priestley. To repeat these names does the heart good. They breathe a fragrance through the common air. They lift up the whole race to which they belonged. With the churches of which they were pillars or chief ornaments, I have many sympathies; nor do I condemn the union of ourselves to these or any other churches whose doctrines we approve, provided that we do it, without severing ourselves in the least from the universal church. On this point, we cannot be too earnest. We must shun the spirit of sectarianism as from Hell. We must shudder at the thought of shutting up God in any denomination. We must think no man the better for belonging to our communion; no man the worse for belonging to another. We must look with undiminished joy on goodness, though it shine forth from the most adverse sect. Christ's spirit must be equally dear and honored, no matter where manifested. To confine God's love or his good spirit to any party, sect, or name, is to sin against the fundamental law of the kingdom of God; to break that living bond with Christ's universal church, which is one of our chief helps to perfection.

I have now given what seem to me the most important views in relation to the church; and in doing this I have not quoted much from scripture, because quotations cannot be given fully on this or on any controverted point in the compass of a discourse. I have relied on what is vastly more important, on the general strain and tone of scripture, on the spirit of the christian religion, on the sum and substance of Christ's teachings, which is plainly this, that inward holiness, or goodness, or disinterested love is all in all. I also want time to consider at large the arguments or modes of reasoning by which this or that church sets itself forth as the only true church, and by which the necessity of entering it is thought to be proved. I cannot, however, abstain from offering a few remarks on these.

The principal arguments on which exclusive churches rest their claims, are drawn from christian history and literature, in other words, from the records of the primitive ages of our faith, and from the writings of the early Fathers. These arguments, I think, may be disposed of by a single remark, that they cannot be comprehended or weighed by the mass of Christians. How very, very few in our congregations can enter into the critical study of ecclesiastical history, or wade through the folios of the Greek and Latin fathers! Now, if it were necessary to join a particular church in order to receive the blessings of Christianity, is it to be conceived that the discovery of this church should require a learning plainly denied to the mass of human beings? Would not this church shine out with the brightness of the sun? Would it be hidden in the imperfect records of distant ages, or in the voluminous writings of a body of ancient authors, more

remarkable for rhetoric than soundness of judgment. The learned cannot agree about these authorities. How can the great multitudes of believers interpret them? Would not the scriptures guide us by simple sure rules, to the only true church, if to miss it were death? To my own mind this argument has a force akin to demonstration.

I pass to another method of defending the claims which one or another church sets up to exclusive acceptance with God. It is an unwarrantable straining of the figurative language of scripture. Because the church is spoken of as one body, vine, or temple, theologians have argued that it is one outward organization, to which all men must be joined. But a doctrine built on metaphor is worth little. Every kind of absurdity may find a sanction in figures of speech, explained by tame, prosaic, cold-hearted commentators. The beautiful forms of speech to which I have referred, were intended to express the peculiarly close and tender unions which necessarily subsist among all the enlightened and sincere disciples of such a religion as Christ's, a religion, whose soul, essence, and breath of life is Love, which reveals to us in Jesus the perfection of philanthropy, and which calls to us to drink spiritually of that blood of self-sacrifice, which was shed for the whole human race. How infinitely exalted is the union of minds and hearts formed by such a religion, above any outward connexion established by rites and forms. Yet the latter has been seized on by the earthly understanding, as the chief meaning of scripture, and magnified into supreme importance. Has not Paul taught us that there is but one perfect bond, Love?*

* Colossians, iii. 14.

Has not Christ taught us, that the seal set on his disciples, by which all men are to know them, is Love? Is not this the badge of the true church, the life of the true body of Christ? And is not every disciple of every name and form who is inspired with this, embraced indissolubly in the Christian union?

It is sometimes urged by those who maintain the necessity of connexion with what they call "the true church," that God has a right to dispense his blessings through what channels or on what terms he pleases; that if he sees fit to communicate his Holy Spirit through a certain priesthood or certain ordinances, we are bound to seek the gift in his appointed way; and that, having actually chosen this method of imparting it, he may justly withhold it from those who refuse to comply with his appointment. I reply, that the right of the Infinite Father to bestow his blessings in such ways as to his infinite wisdom and love may seem best, no man can be so irreverent as to deny. But is it not reasonable to expect, that he will adopt such methods or conditions as will seem to accord with his perfection? And ought we not to distrust such as seem to dishonor him? Suppose, for example, that I were told that the Infinite Father had decreed to give his Holy Spirit to such as should bathe freely in the sea. Ought I not to require the most plain, undeniable proofs of a purpose, apparently so unworthy of his majesty and goodness, before yielding obedience to it? The presumption against it is exceedingly strong. That the Infinite Father, who is ever present to the human soul, to whom it is unspeakably dear, who has created it for communion with himself, who desires and delights to impart to it his grace, that he should ordain

sea-bathing as a condition or means of spiritual communication, is so improbable, that I must insist on the strongest testimony to its truth. Now I meet precisely this difficulty in the doctrine, that God bestows his Holy Spirit on those who receive bread and wine, or flesh and blood, or a form of benediction or baptism, or any other outward ministration from the hands or lips of certain privileged ministers or priests. It is the most glorious act and manifestation of God's power and love, to impart enlightening, quickening, purifying influences to the immortal soul. To imagine that these descend in connexion with certain words, signs, or outward rites, administered by a frail fellow-creature, and are withheld or abridged in the absence of such rites, seems, at first, an insult to his wisdom and goodness; seems to bring down his pure, infinite throne, to set arbitrary limits to his highest agency, and to assimilate his worship to that of false gods. The scriptures teach us, "that God giveth grace to the humble;" that, "he giveth his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." This is the great law of divine communications; and we can see its wisdom, because the mind, which hungers for Divine assistances, is most prepared to use them aright. And can we really believe, that the prayers and aspirations of a penitent, thirsting soul, need to be seconded by the outward offices of a minister or priest? Or that for want of these, they find less easy entrance into the ear of the ever present, all loving Father? My mind recoils from this doctrine as dishonorable to God, and I ought not to receive it without clear proofs. I want something more than metaphors, or analogies, or logical inferences. I want some express divine testimony. And where is it given? Do

we not know, that thousands and millions of Christians, whose lives and death have borne witness to their faith, have been unable to find it in the scriptures, or any where else? And can we believe that the spiritual communication of such men with the Divinity has been forfeited or impaired, because they have abstained from rites which, in their consciences, they could not recognise as of divine appointment? That so irrational and extravagant a doctrine should enter the mind of a man who has the capacity of reading the New Testament, would seem an impossibility, did not history show us that it has been not only believed, but made the foundation of the bitterest intolerance and the bloodiest persecutions.

The notion that, by a decree of God's sovereign will, his grace or spirit flows, through certain rites, to those who are in union with a certain church, and that it is promised to none besides, has no foundation in scripture or reason. The church, as I have previously suggested, is not an arbitrary appointment; it does not rest on will, but is ordained on account of its obvious fitness to accomplish the spiritual improvement which is the end of Christianity. It corresponds to our nature. It is a union of means, and influences, and offices, which rational and moral creatures need. It has no affinity with the magical operations so common in false religions; its agency is intelligible and level to the common mind. Its two great rites, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are not meant to act as charms. When freed from the errors and superstitions which have clung to them for ages, and when administered as they should be, with tenderness and solemnity, they are powerful means of bringing great truths to the mind, and of touching the heart, and for these ends they

are ordained. The adaptation of the church to the promotion of holiness among men, is its grand excellence; and where it accomplishes this end, its work is done, and no greater can be conceived on earth or in heaven. The moment we shut our eyes on this truth, and conceive of the church as serving us by forms and ordinances, which are effectual only in the hands of privileged officials or priests, we plunge into the region of shadows and superstitions. We have no ground to tread on, no light to guide us. This mysterious power, lodged in the hands of a few fellow-creatures, tends to give a servile spirit to the mass of Christians, to impair manliness and self-respect, to subdue the intellect to the reception of the absurdest dogmas. Religion loses its simple grandeur, and degenerates into mechanism and form. The conscience is quieted by something short of true repentance; something besides purity of heart and life is made the qualification for heaven. The surest device for making the mind a coward and a slave is a wide-spread and closely-cemented church, the powers of which are concentrated in the hands of a "sacred order," and which has succeeded in arrogating to its rites or ministers a sway over the future world, over the soul's everlasting weal or wo. The inevitable, degrading influence of such a church is demonstrative proof against its divine origin.

There is no end to the volumes written in defence of this or that church, which sets itself forth as the only true church, and claims exclusive acceptance with God. But the unlettered Christian has an answer to them all. He cannot and need not seek it in libraries. He finds it, almost without seeking, in plain passages of the New Testament, and in his own heart. He reads and he feels

that religion is an Inward Life. This he knows, not by report but by consciousness, by the prostration of his soul in penitence, by the surrender of his will to the Divine, by overflowing gratitude, by calm trust, and by a new love to his fellow-creatures. Will it do to tell such a man that the promises of Christianity do not belong to him, that access to God is denied him, because he is not joined with this or that exclusive church? Has not this access been granted to him already? Has he not prayed in his griefs, and been consoled? in his temptations, and been strengthened? Has he not found God near in his solitudes, and in the great congregation? Does he thirst for any thing so fervently as for perfect assimilation to the divine purity? And can he question God's readiness to help him, because he is unable to find in scripture a command to bind himself to this or another self-magnifying church? How easily does the experience of the true Christian brush away the cobwebs of theologians! He loves and reveres God, and in this spirit has a foretaste of heaven: and can heaven be barred against him by ecclesiastical censures? He has felt the power of the cross and resurrection and promises of Jesus Christ; and is there any "height or depth" of human exclusiveness and bigotry which can separate him from his Lord? He can die for truth and humanity; and is there any man so swelled by the conceit of his union with the true church as to stand apart and say, "I am holier than thou?" When by means of the writings or conversation of Christians of various denominations, you look into their hearts, and discern the deep workings, and conflicts, and aspirations of piety, can you help seeing in them tokens of the presence and operations of God's spirit, more authentic

and touching than in all the harmonies and beneficent influences of the outward universe? Who can shut up this Spirit in any place or any sect? Who will not rejoice to witness it in its fruits of justice, goodness, purity, and piety, wherever they meet the eye? Who will not hail it as the infallible sign of the accepted worshipper of God?

One word more respecting the arguments adduced in support of one or another exclusive church. They are continually and of necessity losing their force. Arguments owe their influence very much to the mental condition of those to whom they are addressed. What is proof to one man is no proof to another. The evidence which is triumphant in one age is sometimes thought below notice in the next. Men's reasonings on practical subjects are not cold, logical processes, standing separate in the mind, but are carried on in intimate connexion with their prevalent feelings and modes of thought. Generally speaking, that and that only is truth to a man, which accords with the common tone of his mind, with the mass of his impressions, with the results of his experience, with his measure of intellectual development, and especially with those deep convictions and biases which constitute what we call character. Now, it is the tendency of increasing civilization, refinement, and expansion of mind, to produce a tone of thought and feeling unfriendly to the church-spirit, to reliance on church-forms as essential to salvation. As the world advances, it leaves matters of form behind. In proportion as men get into the heart of things, they are less anxious about exteriors. In proportion as religion becomes a clear reality, we grow tired of shows. In the progress of ages there spring up

in greater numbers men of mature thought and spiritual freedom, who unite self-reverence with reverence of God, and who cannot, without a feeling approaching shame and conscious degradation, submit to a church which accumulates outward, rigid, mechanical observances towards the Infinite Father. A voice within them, which they cannot silence, protests against the perpetual repetition of the same signs, motions, words, as unworthy of their own spiritual powers, and of Him who deserves the highest homage of the reason and the heart. Their filial spirit protests against it. In common life, a refined, lofty mind expresses itself in simple, natural, unconstrained manners; and the same tendency, though often obstructed, is manifested in religion. The progress of Christianity, which must go on, is but another name for the growing knowledge and experience of that "spiritual worship of the Father," which Christ proclaimed as the end of his mission; and before this, the old, idolatrous reliance on ecclesiastical forms and organizations cannot stand. There is thus a perpetually swelling current which exclusive churches have to stem, and which must sooner or later sweep away their proud pretensions. What avails it, that this or another church summons to its aid fathers, traditions, venerated usages? The Spirit, the Genius of Christianity is stronger than all these. The great ideas of the religion must prevail over narrow, perverse interpretations of it. On this ground, I have no alarm at reports of the triumphs of the Catholic church. The Spirit of Christianity is stronger than popes and councils. Its venerableness and divine beauty put to shame the dignities and pomps of an hierarchy; and men must more and more recognise it, as alone essential to salvation.

From the whole discussion, through which I have now led you, you will easily gather how I regard the Church, and what importance I attach to it. In its true idea, or regarded as the union of those who partake in the spirit of Jesus Christ, I revere it as the noblest of all associations. Our common social unions are poor by its side. In the world we form ties of interest, pleasure, ambition. We come together as creatures of time and sense, for transient amusement or display. In the church we meet as God's children; we recognise in ourselves something higher than this animal and worldly life. We come, that holy feeling may spread from heart to heart. The church, in its true idea, is a retreat from the world. We meet in it, that by union with the holy, we may get strength to withstand our common intercourse with the impure. We meet to adore God, to open our souls to his Spirit, and by recognition of the common Father to forget all distinction among ourselves, to embrace all men as brothers. This spiritual union with the holy who are departed and who yet live, is the beginning of that perfect fellowship which constitutes Heaven. It is to survive all ties. The bonds of husband and wife, parent and child, are severed at death; the union of the virtuous friends of God and man is as eternal as virtue, and this union is the essence of the true church.

To the church-relation, in this broad, spiritual view of it, I ascribe the highest dignity and importance. But as to union with a particular denomination or with a society of Christians for public worship and instruction, this, however important, is not to be regarded as the highest means of grace. We ought, indeed, to seek help for ourselves, and to give help to others, by upholding religious

institutions, by "meeting together in the name of Christ." The influence of Christianity is perpetuated and extended, in no small degree, by the public offices of piety, by the visible "communion of saints." But it is still true, that the public means of religion are not its chief means. Private helps to piety are the most efficacious. The great work of religion is to be done, not in society, but in secret, in the retired soul, in the silent closet. Communion with God is eminently the means of religion, the nutriment and life of the soul, and we can commune with God in solitude as no where else. Here his presence may be most felt. It is by the breathing of the unrestrained soul, by the opening of the whole heart to "Him who seeth in secret;" it is by reviewing our own spiritual history, by searching deeply into ourselves, by solitary thought, and solitary, solemn consecration of ourselves to a new virtue; it is by these acts, and not by public gatherings, that we chiefly make progress in the religious life. It is common to speak of the house of public worship as a holy place; but it has no exclusive sanctity. The holiest spot on earth is that where the soul breathes its purest vows and forms or executes its noblest purposes; and on this ground were I to seek the holiest spot in your city, I should not go to your splendid sanctuaries, but to closets of private prayer. Perhaps the "Holy of Holies" among you is some dark, narrow room, from which most of us would shrink as unfit for human habitation; but God dwells there. He hears the remusic more grateful than the swell of all your organs, sees there a beauty such as nature, in these her robes of spring, does not unfold; for there he meets, and sees, and hears the humblest, most thankful, most trustful worshipper; sees the

sorest trials serenely borne, the deepest injuries forgiven; sees toils and sacrifices cheerfully sustained, and death approached through poverty and lonely illness with a triumphant faith. The consecration, which such virtues shed over the obscurest spot, is not and cannot be communicated by any of those outward rites, by which our splendid structures are dedicated to God.

You see the rank which belongs to the church, whether gathered in one place or spread over the whole earth. It is a sacred and blessed union; but must not be magnified above other means and helps of religion. The great aids of piety are secret not public. The Christian cannot live without private prayer; he may live and make progress without a particular church. Providence may place us far from the resorts of our fellow-disciples, beyond the sound of the Sabbath-bell, beyond all ordinances; and we may find Sabbaths and ordinances in our own spirits. Illness may separate us from the outward church as well as from the living world, and the soul may yet be in health and prosper. There have been men of eminent piety, who, from conscience, have separated themselves from all denominations of Christians and all outward worship. Milton, that great soul, in the latter years of his life, forsook all temples made with hands, and worshipped wholly in the inward sanctuary. So did William Law, the author of that remarkable book, "The Serious Call to a holy life." His excess of devotion (for in him devotion ran into excess,) led him to disparage all occasional acts of piety. He lived in solitude, that he might make life a perpetual prayer. These men are not named as models in this particular. They mistook the wants of the soul, and misinterpreted the Scriptures. Even they,

with all their spirituality, would have found moral strength and holy impulse in religious association. But with such examples before us, we learn not to exclude men from God's favor, because severed from the outward church.

The doctrine of this discourse is plain. Inward sanctity, pure love, disinterested attachment to God and man, obedience of heart and life, sincere excellence of character, this is the one thing needful, this the essential thing in religion; and all things else, ministers, churches, ordinances, places of worship, all are but means, helps, secondary influences, and utterly worthless when separated from this. To imagine that God regards any thing but this, that he looks at any thing but the heart, is to dishonor him, to express a mournful insensibility to his pure character. Goodness, purity, virtue, this is the only distinction in God's sight. This is intrinsically, essentially, everlastingly, and by its own nature, lovely, beautiful, glorious, divine. It owes nothing to time, to circumstance, to outward connexions. It shines by its own light. It is the sun of the spiritual universe. It is God himself dwelling in the human soul. Can any man think lightly of it, because it has not grown up in a certain church, or exalt any church above it? My friends, one of the grandest truths of religion, is the supreme importance of character, of virtue, of that divine spirit which shone out in Christ. The grand heresy is, to substitute any thing for this, whether creed, or form, or church. One of the greatest wrongs to Christ, is to despise his character, his virtue in a disciple who happens to wear a different name from our own.

When I represent to myself true virtue or goodness; not that which is made up of outward proprieties and

prudent calculations, but that which chooses duty for its own sake, and as the first concern; which respects impartially the rights of every human being; which labors and suffers with patient resolution for truth and others' welfare; which blends energy and sweetness, deep humility and self-reverence; which places joyful faith in the Perfection of God, communes with him intimately, and strives to subject to his pure will all thought, imagination, and desire; which lays hold on the promise of everlasting life, and in the strength of this hope endures calmly and firmly the sorest evils of the present state; when I set before me this virtue, all the distinctions on which men value themselves fade away. Wealth is poor; worldly honor is mean; outward forms are beggarly elements. Condition, country, church, all sink into unimportance. Before this simple greatness I bow, I revere. The robed priest, the gorgeous altar, the great assembly, the pealing organ, all the exteriors of religion, vanish from my sight, as I look at the good and great man, the holy, disinterested soul. Even I, with vision so dim, with heart so cold, can see and feel the divinity, the grandeur of true goodness. How then must God regard it! To his pure eye, how lovely must it be! And can any of us turn from it, because some water has not been dropped on its forehead, or some bread put into its lips by a minister or priest; or because it has not learned to repeat some mysterious creed, which a church or human council has ordained?

My friends, reverence virtue, holiness, the upright will which inflexibly cleaves to duty and the pure law of God. Reverence nothing in comparison with it. Regard this as the end, and all outward services as the means. Judge

of men by this. Think no man the better, no man the worse, for the church he belongs to. Try him by his fruits. Expel from your breasts the demon of sectarianism, narrowness, bigotry, intolerance. This is not, as we are apt to think, a slight sin. It is a denial of the supremacy of goodness. It sets up something, whether a form or dogma, above the virtue of the heart and the life. Sectarianism immures itself in its particular church as in a dungeon, and is there cut off from the free air, the cheerful light, the goodly prospects, the celestial beauty of the church universal.

My friends, I know that I am addressing those who hold various opinions as to the controverted points of theology. We have grown up under different influences. We bear different names. But if we purpose solemnly to do God's will, and are following the precepts and example of Christ, we are one church, and let nothing divide us. Diversities of opinion may incline us to worship under different roofs, or diversities of tastes or habit, to worship with different forms. But these varieties are not schisms; they do not break the unity of Christ's Church. We may still honor, and love, and rejoice in one another's spiritual life and progress, as truly as if we were cast into one and the same unyielding form. God loves variety in nature and in the human soul, nor does he reject it in Christian worship. In many great truths, in those which are most quickening, purifying and consoling, we all, I hope, agree. There is too a common ground of practice, aloof from all controversy, on which we may all meet. We may all unite hearts and hands in doing good, in fulfilling God's purposes of love towards our race, in toiling and suffering for the cause of humanity, in spread-

ing intelligence, freedom and virtue, in making God known for the reverence, love, and imitation of his creatures, in resisting the abuses and corruptions of past ages, in exploring and drying up the sources of poverty, in rescuing the fallen from intemperance, in succoring the orphan and widow, in enlightening and elevating the depressed portions of the community, in breaking the yoke of the oppressed and enslaved, in exposing and withstanding the spirit and horrors of war, in sending God's Word to the ends of the earth, in redeeming the world from sin and woe. The angels and pure spirits who visit our earth, come not to join a sect, but to do good to all. May this universal charity descend on us, and possess our hearts; may our narrowness, exclusiveness, and bigotry melt away under this mild celestial fire. Thus we shall not only join ourselves to Christ's Universal Church on earth, but to the Invisible Church, to the innumerable company of the just made perfect, in the mansions of everlasting purity and peace.

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THE

DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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MARK, XII. 28—34.

And one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

And Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is, 'Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' This is the first commandment; and the second is like, namely this, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' There is none other commandment greater than these."

And the Scribe said unto him, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is One God, and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole-burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

In the present discourse, I design to give an outline of the evidence which proves, that Unitarianism was the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so, I shall appeal to our Saviour's own words, as recorded in the pages of the Evangelist. But while, for this purpose, I

shall constantly refer to the statements contained in the four Gospels, I wish it to be understood, that the subject of the present address does not require, nor indeed would it admit of, my taking notice of any things which are recorded in the Gospels, except the discourses and conversations of our Lord. I mention this, to prevent any disappointment being felt at my omission of several points which, were my subject more comprehensive than it is, it would be wrong to pass over without remark.

I shall make only one more preliminary observation. I would call your attention to the great importance of the argument which is now to be considered. Some may think — and, indeed, it has been said, that even though it were granted, that Unitarianism was the faith of the Old Testament times, still this would not prove our doctrine to be true; for that we live under another dispensation of religion; and the doctrine of the Trinity may be one of the points of difference between the Mosaic and the Christian systems. The soundness of this reasoning I do not admit; and I am of opinion, that the text which has been just read, shows that, with regard to the great article of the Unity of God, we live under no new dispensation. But this point, I stop not now to canvass more minutely. I would merely remark, that whatever may be thought of the relevancy of the points discussed, and, as I humbly conceive, proved in our last lecture, there can be no question of the great importance of that which is this evening to engage our attention; for, I think, there is no reflecting Christian in the world who will not admit, that, if I succeed in demonstrating, that the faith which was taught by our Lord Jesus Christ was a pure Unitarian faith, I shall have laid a sufficient ground for

appealing to every man, who desires to be a disciple of Christ, to maintain and profess the same doctrine. Such being the great authority and influence which the subject of the present lecture is entitled to exercise upon the mind and faith of us all, I earnestly call upon each one of you, my hearers, both those who agree with me, and those who differ from me at present, to dismiss, as far as possible, from your minds, all preconceived opinions, — all prepossessions and prejudices, — all selfish and partial affections, — and to listen to the words of the Saviour with a pure and single desire to learn, — to embrace, to profess, and to obey the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus. And may Almighty God give to each one among us, understanding to discern, — candor to avow, and integrity to maintain, — the pure and holy doctrine which the Captain of our salvation came into this world to reveal, and died to confirm.

The main point to be considered is this, — did the great Captain of our salvation, either in his private instructions or in his public discourses, inculcate the doctrine of the Trinity; or did he teach and preach the simple Unity of the Most High? Did he proclaim, that in the Godhead, there are three distinct persons, exactly equal to one another in power, wisdom, and eternity; in majesty and in glory, and in all divine perfections? Did he farther declare, that those three distinct persons are nevertheless but one Being, so that while each of them, separately considered, is truly and properly God supreme, yet there are not three Gods, but only one God? Or did he teach, as Unitarians believe he did, and as they believe that all Scripture and all nature teaches, — that there is but One God, the Father? This is the question now to be deter-

mined; and to its examination I shall immediately proceed without farther preface, — appealing, as my plan requires, to our Lord's own words exclusively.

1. And it does appear to me, that the language and conduct of our Great Master, on a great variety of occasions, shew most clearly — I was about to say, beyond all dispute or doubt — that he maintained the same strict views of the Unity of God, which were propounded in the Old Testament, — which were universally entertained by his countrymen at the time of his appearance, and which are professed by their descendants down to the present day; — those, namely, of pure Unitarianism. For example, very soon after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, he had occasion to repress an instigation to idolatry, by which he was assailed during the scene of his temptation in the wilderness. And in what manner did he do so? By quoting an injunction contained in the books of the Old Testament: — "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;*" or rather, as in the original, JEHOVAH, *thy God;* "*and him only shalt thou serve.*"* But this text would not have been of any authority, if Jesus knew that two other divine persons were as well entitled to religious homage as the great Being to whom, and to whom only, it is here declared to be due. In this case, the commandment given to the Jews, respecting the object of supreme adoration, would have been abolished, and a different one, adapted to the new revelation, ought to have been substituted in its stead. The same point is

* See Matt. iii. 10, and Luke iv. 8. Compare Deut. vi. 13, especially according to the reading of the Septuagint. "*Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and him alone shalt thou serve.*"

most convincingly established by the conversation recorded in our text. The Scribe, who appears to have been a man of sound understanding, desirous, as it would appear, of testing our Saviour's fitness for the office of a public teacher, asked him, — *Which is the first commandment of all?* Here, then, was a fair opportunity, and, indeed, an open challenge, to declare any change that our Lord was authorized to make in the doctrine held by the Jewish nation touching the One God. Had our Lord known, that henceforth the one person of Jehovah was no longer to be worshipped in the true Church, he was bound, in common honesty, to declare it. But, instead of announcing any change in the generally-received doctrine, or in the worship founded upon it, our Lord quoted, for his sole answer, an explicit scriptural assertion of the Unity, and the commandment built upon it. "*The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is One Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*"* On this point, there was no dispute between the Scribe and the Saviour, — no difference between the Law and the Gospel; for the Scribe admitted the correctness of our Lord's reply; and Jesus approved the wisdom of his observations, and declared he was "*not far from the kingdom of God.*"

To the same effect I might quote many other passages; but, for brevity, I pass on to another topic. I proceed, then, to observe that, even if we leave out of account the

* Our Saviour here quotes Deut. vi. 4, 5. The reading of the latter verse, as given by him, differs slightly, both from that of the Hebrew and Septuagint; but the sense is the same.

connexion between the old and the new dispensation, our Lord's own teachings would have been sufficient to inculcate the doctrine of the strict unity of the Supreme Being. On different occasions he asserted it in express terms. He said to the disciples, "*One is your Father who is in heaven,*" Matt. xxiii. 9; no mention here of any but one. "*None is good but One; that is God,*" Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19. He here tells us that God is One. Had he been commissioned to reveal that God was Three, or Three in One, I cannot but believe he would have been equally explicit in declaring the important fact: nay, much more so; for it would have stood much more in need of illustration and proof. This One God he declares over and over to be "THE FATHER;" that is the name by which he loved to distinguish the great object of worship and veneration. With that glorious Being he never associates any co-equals in partnership of Deity. On the contrary, he affirms that the Father is the Only True God: "*This is life eternal, that they might know thee,* THE ONLY TRUE GOD, *and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,*" John xvii. 3. He addresses the Father as the "LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH," Luke x. 21; a title which he never applied to any other person or subsistence but the Father alone. He elsewhere declares that "THE FATHER *is greater than all,*" John x. 28. It is remarkable that our Saviour, throughout the whole course of his ministry, continually spoke of God and of his Father; and always in such a manner as shewed that he meant, by the two terms, exactly the same thing. Of this I may give one example. — "*The true worshippers shall worship the* FATHER *in spirit and in truth; for the* FATHER *seeketh such to worship him.* GOD *is a spirit, and they that wor-*

ship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The two names are perpetually interchanged in this manner; but there is no other person, besides the Father, whose name is thus employed as a substitute or equivalent for that of God. And yet we are told that two other persons are equally with the Father included under this latter title, equally entitled to bear it, and that the main object of our Saviour's coming upon earth was to reveal a knowledge of this co-equal and co-ordinate Trinity to mankind! If this were the case, how does it happen that our Lord seems to take every opportunity of implying and asserting the sole supremacy of the Father, the One Divine Person, whose Godhead no one disputed; while he never, upon any one occasion, asserted the co-equal Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, two divine persons of whose Deity none of his hearers had ever dreamt; and the more especially as we are assured that this is a glorious doctrine, a saving truth, nay, a truth without which there can be no salvation. Is it thus, I ask, that any orthodox Trinitarian minister would preach the Trinity to a nation of Unitarians? Is it thus that such persons do preach the Gospel in any Unitarian families to which they gain admission? I allude to their conduct, in this respect, as a fact neither for the purpose of censure nor of approbation. It is to be hoped they are conscientious in their motives; but I trust they will admit that our Blessed Saviour was neither less zealous for the truth, nor less honest in its avowal, than themselves. Yet either he or they must be wrong; for, as I have shown, they proceed upon plans totally distinct. *They* are perpetually insisting upon the Trinity; he never insisted upon it at all.

2. I must pass over many passages which might be selected for examples under this head, and proceed to the second point which it is necessary to consider in illustrating what our Lord taught on the subject; I mean his doctrine concerning himself. Did he ever declare that he possessed, in one person, two distinct natures united, — the human and the divine; that he was truly God, in all respects equal to the Father, possessed of eternal duration, almighty power, omniscient wisdom, unbounded goodness, and the infinity of all the divine perfections; while, at the same time, he was also properly a man, subject to all the wants and imperfections of humanity, sin only excepted? This is the commonly received doctrine. But did our Saviour himself teach this? If so, I confess I cannot find it in any of his discourses. On the contrary, I find, that throughout all his instructions, our Lord ever most distinctly recognised his own dependence upon a superior power; and, far from tracing his gifts to his own inherent authority, he uniformly referred them to the will and appointment of the Father alone.

With a declaration of this kind he opened his public ministry. He commenced it by reading to the people assembled in the synagogue of Nazareth, where he had been brought up from his youth, and by applying to himself the words of the prophet Isaiah; — "*The spirit of* JEHOVAH *is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to announce deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,*" Luke iv. 18; compare Isaiah lxi. 1: words which are most beautifully descriptive of the character and

office of Jesus, as a person endowed with the spirit of God; as the Christ, or the anointed one; as a messenger sent forth to proclaim glad tidings in his name; but which are utterly unsuitable to describe one who was himself the source of every endowment, and could not possibly be the delegate of any higher power. Our Saviour, therefore, began his preaching with a text and a discourse most distinctively Unitarian; for it is exactly in this manner that we are accustomed to speak of him in our ordinary ministrations.

In fulfilment of the commission thus announced, Jesus travelled from place to place through Galilee, Judea, and the neighboring countries; every where giving evidence, by the mighty miracles which he wrought, that the spirit of the Lord was actually upon him. The merit of these wonderful works he never once assumed to himself. On the contrary, he repeatedly declared that "*the works which he did were works that* HIS FATHER *had given him to finish*," John v. 36; that "THE FATHER, *who dwelt in him, himself performed the works*," John xiv. 10; that "*of his own self he could do nothing*," John x. 30. A strange declaration this must appear to those who consider it as proceeding from the lips of the Almighty! On one occasion he expressly thanked the Father for enabling him to work a miracle in answer to his earnest prayer; — "FATHER! *I thank thee that thou hast heard me*," John xi. 41. I ask my Trinitarian friends to consider, is this an expression such as was to have been expected in accordance with their theory? On the same occasion he intimates that all his miracles were preceded by prayer to God for power — "*I know that thou hearest*

me always." Is not this most strange and unaccountable to those who regard him as omnipotent?

He delivered doctrines the most sublime that the world ever heard; but he referred the wisdom by which he spoke to the inspiration of the Father. — "*My doctrine,*" he said, "*is not mine, but* HIS THAT SENT ME," John vii. 16; "*He that sent me is true: and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him,*" John viii. 26; "*Even as* THE FATHER *hath said unto me, so I speak,*" John xii. 50. These sentiments are in most exact agreement with the opinions held by us Unitarians; but they must appear somewhat extraordinary to those who suppose that he by whom they were spoken was himself the omniscient source of all wisdom and of all knowledge.

His devotional habits lead us to the same conclusion; for he was much in prayer. In every important emergency of his life, his prayers are expressly recorded:* on some occasions we find him withdrawing from the world, and spending whole nights in supplication. This fact alone would disprove the commonly received opinion respecting his Supreme Deity; for why or how could he have prayed, if he had, in his own person, an omnipotent nature, which could, by a word, a thought, accomplish every wish? If the common doctrine be true, he was

* See Matt. xi. 25, 26; xiv. 19, 23; xv. 36; xxvi. 26, 27, 39, 44, 46, 53. Mark i. 35; vi. 46; viii. 6, 7; xiv. 22, 23, 35 — 39; xv. 34. Luke iii. 21; v. 16; vi. 12, 41; ix. 18, 28, 29; x. 21; xi. 1; xxii. 17, 19, 31, 32, 41 — 45; xxiii. 34, 46; xxiv. 30. John vi. 11, 23; xi. 41, 42; xii. 27, 28; xiv. 16, 17; xvii. *throughout.* Some of these passages are parallel to each other, and show that there is a perfect uniformity in the accounts given by different evangelists of our Lord's devotional habits.

himself the hearer of prayer, and under necessity of praying to none. But yet we find he prayed — he prayed to the Father: he thereby owned subjection to the Father's power, and testified to his own inferior and dependent nature. But more than this. He prayed in agony, until his sweat was as it were great drops of blood; and, in that very prayer, he owned subjection to the Father in express words, — "*Not as I will, but as thou wilt*," Luke xxii. 41—43. In this hour of distress an angel was sent to comfort him, *but the immediate object of the prayer was not fulfilled;* for it pleased the wisdom of the Eternal Father that the bitter cup, which he deprecated, should not pass away until he had drained it to the dregs. Could the being who prayed — who prayed to another — who prayed thus fervently — whose prayer was thus refused — could this being be Almighty God? I almost shudder to put these questions; but they are needful to elucidate the truth.

Even more decisively to the point are the instructions which our Lord has given to his disciples on the subject of prayer. He commanded them to address their prayers to God, even the Father. "*Pray to* THY FATHER, *who is in secret*," Matt. vi. 6. "*When ye pray, say,* — OUR FATHER, *who art in heaven*," Matt. vi. 13. "*The true worshippers shall worship* THE FATHER," John iv. 23. "*How much more shall* YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER *give good things to them that ask him*," Matt. vii. 11. These instructions are literally complied with by all Unitarian Christians. Within these walls, the worship which the Saviour enjoined is constantly practised: in our churches and in our families our supplications are

addressed TO THE FATHER: and we humbly trust, that we address them to him in spirit and in truth. The worship, therefore, which the Saviour recommended is a pure Unitarian worship. He even went farther; for he expressly disclaims being the hearer of prayer. "*In that day* YE SHALL ASK ME NOTHING. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye will ask* THE FATHER *in my name,* HE *will give it you,*" John xvi. 23, 26. How can this be reconciled with the idea, that Christ is God, equal with the Father?

He expressly disclaimed all thought of equality with God. The Jews on one occasion, falsely, — and, to all appearance, — maliciously accused him of making himself God, or rather, *a God*, John x. 33. If he had said so, or if he were so in fact, he was bound to avow and justify his claim. But did he do so? — No; but, on the contrary, he shewed that the accusation was false. He shewed that he had not asserted any such character. He produced, from the Old Testament, a much stronger expression than that which he had employed; and he proved, that the charge was groundless. "*Jesus said it is written in your law,* '*I have said, Ye are Gods.*' *If then, he* (that is, the Psalmist) *called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, how say ye of him, whom* THE FATHER *hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said,* I AM THE SON of GOD," John x. 34 — 36. Surely if the common opinion respecting him had been true, Jesus would not have had recourse to such equivocation as this. On our principles, and, we believe, on the principles held by our Great Master, the reasoning is just, and the exculpation triumphant; but, on the

Orthodox hypothesis, I cannot but think, the reply was evasive, not to say deceptive.*

* A passage similar in form, though entirely different in its historical sense from that adverted to in the Lecture, is John v. 16—18. "*The Jews persecuted Jesus*" (that is, accused him), "*because he did such things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them,* 'My Father worketh until now, and I also work.' *For this, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him;*" which evidently means, that they *wished for a pretext* to kill him; "*because he not only violated the Sabbath, but also called God his Father* (peculiarly), *making himself equal unto God.*" Many critics, both Trinitarians and Unitarians, suppose that the Jews here accused our Saviour of claiming an *absolute* equality with the Deity; but this, I think, is not consistent with the facts of the narrative. Our Lord was accused of breaking the Sabbath, by performing a miracle on that day: his defence was, in substance, that the miracle had been wrought by the immediate power of God, his Father, to whose honor the Sabbath was consecrated; and, therefore, that his action was not to be esteemed a transgression of the divine law. This appears to me to be the meaning of the sentence, "*My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work;*" which, on this supposition, may be thus paraphrased, "My Father, the God of the Sabbath, has furnished me with power and authority to work miracles on this as on other days, and I have performed them in obedience to his will." This answer increased the virulence of his enemies; for they justly regarded it as plainly asserting, that he had a divine authority and commission. The Jews did not suppose, that the power of working miracles argued, in all cases, the possession of such a commission. When, therefore, our Saviour openly claimed a divine commission, they took objection to his answer on two grounds: first, the form of expression,—"*My* Father," (not "*Our* Father,") which asserted an intimate relationship to the Deity, not partaken by his auditors; and, secondly, the allegation of a divine warrant for his actions. In claiming this, they judged (in my opinion justly) that our Saviour made his own miraculous act or word equivalent to an act of God, and an expression of the will of the Deity; and this appears to me to be what they meant, and all they meant, when they said, that he

On another occasion, Jesus disclaimed divine knowledge in express terms. "*Of that day and hour knoweth no man: not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son;* BUT THE FATHER," Mark xiii. 32.

On another occasion, he expressly disclaimed the attribute of divine power. "*To sit on my right hand, and on my left hand,* IS NOT MINE *to give; but to those for whom it is prepared* OF MY FATHER," Matt. xx. 21—23.

On another occasion, he expressly disclaimed the attribute of divine goodness. "*Why callest thou* ME *good?*

"made *himself* equal to *God.*" They asserted that he made his own act, the act of God. Had they supposed him to claim absolute equality, they would, undoubtedly, have charged him with blasphemy, and would have proceeded to stone him, as their law required, and as they actually did in the instance recorded in John viii. 59, and x. 31; but we read of no such charge being preferred upon this occasion. On the contrary, they appear to have heard him patiently throughout a very full defence of his former declaration; and it deserves notice, that the whole of this defence is consistent with the interpretation now given. He avows a divine commission — he declares its evidences — he enforces its necessary consequence. The whole speech is, in fact, an amplification of the ideas already stated in this note. I am not aware that this interpretation has ever been suggested before; but it seems to me eminently suitable to the context and scope of the passage, and, as such, I offer it to the consideration of the student of Scripture. It ought to be added, that, if the common interpretation of the 18th verse be preferred, our Lord immediately refutes the accusation which it involves, and disclaims the equality which he was charged with asserting. "*Then Jesus answered and said unto them,* Verily, verily, I say unto you, *the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do;* for what things soever he doeth, these also doth the Son likewise. *For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth.*" &c. (See verses 18, 20, &c.)

THERE IS NONE GOOD BUT ONE, *that is*, GOD?" Mark x. 17, 18. Luke xviii. 18.

On another occasion, he directly affirms his own inferiority to the Father. "*If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I go unto the Father;* FOR THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN I," John xiv. 28.

His customary lsnguage plainly asserted and proved his subordination to the Father. He declared, that God his Father had sent him, — had anointed him — had sanctified him — had given him his spirit — had sealed him — had given him a people out of the world — had granted him to have life in himself — and had appointed him to judge* the world. With this cursory notice I must pass over all these topics, and the passages of our Lord's discourses in which they are found. I shall only mention one or two points more. He declared that while in this world, "*he lived by the Father*," John vi. 57. He announced to the disciples before his removal from this earth, that he was about to ascend "*to his Father, and to their Father: and* TO HIS GOD, AND TO THEIR GOD." John xx. 17.

Such is the account which our Saviour himself has given of his mission, power, doctrine, devotion, life, resurrection, and ascension. For my own part I must declare, that I cannot reconcile these numerous, and

* Christ declares that God had *sent* him, — Matt. x. 40. Mark ix. 37. Luke ix. 48; x. 16. John viii. 42; xvii. 18, &c. *Anointed* him, — Luke iv. 18. *Sanctified* him, — John x. 36. *Given him his Spirit*, — John iii. 34. *Sealed* him, — John vi. 27. *Given him a people*, — John xvii. 6, 9. *Granted to him to have life in himself*, — John v. 26. *Appointed him to judge the world*, — John v. 22, 27.

repeated, and express assertions of inferiority, to any other system of doctrine, except that which, as a Unitarian Christian, I glory in professing. And were I to attempt to explain them on any other principle, I should feel myself, at every step, contradicting my Saviour's direct affirmations, and virtually impugning either his knowledge or his veracity.

3. With regard to the doctrine of Jesus, respecting the Holy Spirit, which is commonly considered as the third person of the co-equal Trinity, — I feel it difficult to ascertain how any person could argue, from our Saviour's teaching, that he is God, equal with the Father. It is manifest, that, throughout the greater part of our Lord's discourses, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God, denote, — not any person at all, much less a divine person, — but an energy, or power, or influence, proceeding from God. Thus, our Lord declares, that "*the Spirit of the Lord was upon him*," Luke iv. 17; but how a divine person should be upon him, or, if so, why the third person of the Trinity rather than any of the other two, seems to me incomprehensible. He says in one place, that he cast out demons "*by the Spirit of God*," Matt. xii. 28; but, in the parallel passage, the phrase is, the "*finger of God*," Luke xi. 20. The finger of God, and the Spirit of God, are here, therefore, phrases of the same meaning, — both signifying the miraculous power or agency of the Most High. He tells the disciples, that they should be "*baptised with the Holy Ghost*;" that is, endowed with supernatural gifts. To be baptised with a divine person has no meaning at all. There are certain expressions in the latter part of the Gospel of John (xiv. xv. xvi.) in which our Saviour speaks

of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, and the Comforter, in such a manner as, at first sight, might seem to imply, that he alludes to a person, and not to a mere influence. Whether these expressions are to be understood literally or figuratively is a question of some difficulty, on which I shall not now enter farther than to say, that, on the whole, I incline to the figurative interpretation. But the point is of very small importance, as regards the present argument; because it is manifest, from our Lord's own language, that, even if the Comforter there spoken of, be a real person, he must be inferior, not merely to God, but to Christ himself; and that his agency was to be strictly limited to the Apostles. "*I will pray the Father and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,*" John xiv. 16. "*The Comforter whom the Father will send in my name,*" John xiv. 26. "*He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak,*" John xvi. 13. "*He will receive of mine, and show it unto you,*" John xvi. 14. Even admitting the personality of the Holy Spirit, these expressions intimate nothing of equality; but, on the contrary, show an inferior and dependent agency. As no one contends, that the Holy Spirit is possessed of two natures, these intimations of inferiority must be taken as they are put forth, without any qualification or reserve.

I have now brought before you a selection of passages as ample as the space to which I must confine myself in these lectures would admit, — showing the doctrines which our Saviour actually taught. I do think that these passages, and the discourses from which they have been extracted, are calculated to leave upon any unprejudiced mind a decided impression, that Unitarianism was the

Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the force of the evidence cannot be correctly appreciated, unless we also take into account the total silence of our Lord, with respect to the opposite doctrines; and the total absence of all those results which would necessarily have followed, had Trinitarianism been preached by him.

Had our Lord believed in the Trinity, he must have been aware of its importance. Had he been aware of its importance, he would not have concealed it from those whose salvation depended upon its adoption. On the contrary, he would have put it plainly, frequently, and prominently forward. Yet he never so much as once propounded the doctrine of the Trinity, — he never once declared, that he was God, equal with the Father, — the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. He never once announced the awful fact, of the union of the Two Natures in his own person, — he never once asserted, that the Holy Ghost is a person, distinct from the Father, and equal with him — the Eternal and Almighty God. If he ever expressly taught these, or any of these doctrines, let the passage where he did so be produced. The man who discovers it will immortalize himself; for no such passage has yet been found. For fifteen hundred years these points have been the subject of animated controversy in the Christian church: — the Scriptures have been ransacked and rummaged in search of proofs to support them, yet not a single one of the many phrases in which this doctrine is expressed, and without which it cannot be expressed, has ever yet been found in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Three persons and One God — A tri-une God — Three in one — substance — essence — Two natures in one person — subsistence — hypostasis*

— *Trinity* — *first person* — *second person* — *third person* — *Co-essential* — *co-equal* — *co-eternal* — *God-Man* — *Incarnate God* — *God the Son* — *God the Holy Ghost*, — these, and a great many other phrases, are employed, and are required to express the commonly received opinion. But not one of them all is taken from the language of our Saviour himself. How can this be accounted for, except on the principle that he was taught the Unitarian Faith?

Again, — I call your attention to the absence of all controversy with his countrymen on the subject of the Divine Unity. It will be admitted by all, that, whatever our Saviour may have taught, the faith of his countrymen was a most decided, I might even call it a bigoted Unitarianism. They not only loved the doctrine, but they despised and detested those by whom it was not acknowledged. Any interference with it, real or apparent, would have been sure to excite their indignation, and call forth their bitterest hostility. Yet we never find that our Saviour was engaged in any controversy on the subject of the Unity. Neither Priest nor Lawyer, Scribe nor Pharisee, ever accused him of tampering with this vital principle. On one occasion, his countrymen did for a moment impute to him, as we have seen, that he made himself a God; but his explanation was so complete, that the charge fell at once to the ground, and was never afterwards revived. Even in the hall of judgment there was no whisper heard of such an accusation. He was put to death under a charge of blasphemy; but what was the blasphemy? He was accused of saying, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days," Matt. xxvi. 61. See also Matt. xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 20,

xv. 29. This was the crime, and the only crime, imputed to him by the suborned false witnesses. It was because, in the course of his examination, he declared himself to be the "Messiah, the Son of the Living God," and asserted that his judges should hereafter see him "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxvi. 63 — 66, — that judgment was pronounced against him. Now if the Saviour really believed and taught the doctrine of his own Supreme Deity, how does it happen that no mention of it is found in the record of his trial and conviction? Would such prosecutors, having such a tremendous accusation in reserve, have confined themselves to the comparatively trifling point brought forward against him? Having knowledge of such a fact, would they have been content to go to trial and judgment, on some frivolous charge, grounded on some expression of his about the temple of Jerusalem? The question admits of no solution but one. — He never taught the doctrine.

Again,— We are led to the same conclusion by the absence of all such impressions as would have been produced on the minds of the disciples by a belief that their Lord and Master was truly and really no less than Almighty God. I speak not of their opinions as shown by their writings, but of their feelings, as shown in their intercourse with our Saviour. They ate with him, they drank with him, they talked with him, they reasoned with him, they rebuked him. They acted towards him with nearly the same freedom that they used towards each other. Consider how any of us would be affected if we were admitted to this intimate converse with THE CREATOR OF THE HEAVENS AND OF THE EARTH! What humility,

what abasement, what self-annihilation, would it produce in our minds? We cannot express, we can hardly place any bounds to the feeling of astonishment and awe, by which we should be overwhelmed. Now the disciples were pious men. Under such circumstances, they would have been affected not less powerfully than we should have been ourselves. But we can see no symptom of any such emotions, in the whole of their conduct towards their Master. What proof can be more striking that they had never once heard of this mysterious, this tremendous doctrine; that no idea of it had ever flashed across their minds?

The last point of this kind, to which I shall advert, is the absence of all appearance of Trinitarianism from the devotions of our Saviour. He never addressed a single prayer to God the Holy Ghost, nor to God the Son, nor to the Three Persons of the Co-equal Trinity. All his devotion and worship was offered to the Father only. There is not the slightest ground for affirming that he ever offered up any prayer, except such as those recorded in the Gospels, all of which are conceived and expressed in the language of the purest Unitarianism. In this respect, we, of all existing Churches, are the only one who confine ourselves to his language, and follow his example.

The proofs which have now been advanced are plain, simple, and intelligible. They require not the aid of critical skill to make them clear, though they defy its power to obscure them, or turn them aside. They are not hints or allusions, but direct arguments and assertions. They are not found in one discourse of our Lord alone, but pervade all his discourses. They are not confined to the writings of any one evangelist, but are perfectly

conformable to the whole tenor and general scope of all the records of all the evangelists.

And what is advanced in opposition to the conclusions to which these undoubted facts and explicit declarations irresistibly lead? Nothing that is explicit or direct. Some alleged hints — some distant allusions — some far-fetched and fanciful analogies, — of which the utmost that can be said is, that, if the doctrine of Trinitarianism were established by direct proof, the passages referred to, might be so explained as not to be inconsistent with it; but which no man, in his senses, could ever suppose to be sufficient, of themselves, to prove the doctrine in question, were he not misled by the prejudices of education and early habit.

There is only one passage in the whole of the Gospels, in which our Saviour is alleged to have inculcated the doctrine of the Trinity, or even to have made any allusion to that most tremendous mystery: this is the baptismal commission recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19, — "*Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in*" (or rather into) "*the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*" But, consider carefully what our Saviour actually teaches, in this injunction. Does he affirm that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are co-eternal and co-equal in wisdom, power, and glory? — No! Does he say that they are the same in substance? — No! Does he affirm that they are three persons, and only One God? — No! Does he even say that they are persons at all? — No! he says nothing upon any of these points. Then, — if our Saviour, in this passage, neither teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are distinct persons; nor that they are co-equal and co-eternal; nor that they are the same

in substance; nor that they are three persons and One God, — we must take the liberty of affirming, that whatever else he teaches in this text, *he does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity.** Now this is the only passage which has ever yet been brought forward, from our Lord's own words, in proof of the Trinity; and it is probably the

* If it be asked what is the object and what the meaning of the injunction delivered in this verse, I give the following as my view of both. — The object of our Saviour is, in the first place, to secure the propagation of the faith, through the means of the Apostles — (" *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations* ") ; and, in the next place, to promote the open profession of his religion, by the administration of the rite of baptism, the common and well-understood token of conversion, to the proselytes — (" *baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*") It is evident, from a comparison of the various passages in which the phrase occurs, that *to baptize into the name of* any person or thing signifies *to baptize for a profession of belief in the person or thing spoken of.* Hence to *baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* means to baptize for a public testimony that the persons submitting to the ordinance, believe in the Father — that they believe in the Son — and that they believe in the Holy Spirit. Now this is exactly what Unitarians do believe. They believe *in the Father*, as the Only God; to whom they owe Christ himself, and all the blessings of the Gospel: they believe *in the Son*, that is, in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, the Messenger of his mercy, and the minister of his will; and they believe *in the Holy Spirit*, or the miraculous powers and gifts poured out, both on Christ himself and the Apostles, by which the Christian religion was proved to be of divine appointment and command. Had our Saviour meant his injunction to be understood in a Trinitarian sense, he would have shown that such was his intention by saying, *baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as Three Persons yet One God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.* But this he has no where said; and, consequently, this was not his meaning or desire.

strongest argument in its favor which is to be found in the entire Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Can this "*intimation*" stand a comparison with the proofs already adduced in support of the Unity?

So much for the doctrine of the Trinity, as taught by our Lord. There is only one text alleged in proof, and that does not prove it. But we are told there may be indirect ways of proving a doctrine; and, if it can be established that the Deity of the Father, and that of the Son, and that of the Holy Ghost, can be separately proved, then the doctrine of the Trinity follows of course. In my opinion this conclusion would not be just; for, in the case supposed, we might adopt either *Trithcism*, that is, the opinion that there are three distinct Gods; or *Sabellianism*, that, is the opinion that Father, Son, and Spirit, are only three different manifestations or relations of one and the same divine person; and either of these theories would be consistent with the facts of the supposed case.

But we are not driven to any such modes of evading the force of the indirect argument for the Trinity; for we are enabled to assert, that, so far as the teachings of our Lord and Saviour are concerned, we can learn only the Deity of the Father. He taught no other.

As regards the Deity of the Holy Spirit, this point may almost be assumed as granted. Some texts are brought forward, from Christ's discourses, to prove that the Holy Spirit is a *person;* but none, that would now be relied upon, to prove that he is *God.* So far, therefore, as the Third Person of the Trinity is concerned, this controversy may now be considered as at an end. All tacitly, if not expressly, admit that Christ *did not teach the Supreme Deity of the Holy Spirit*, nor assert him

to be God equal with the Father; and undoubtedly he never did.

And as to the doctrine that our Lord himself was God, of one substance and equal with the Father, it might be enough to say that it is contrary to the express assertions of his dependent nature, inferiority and subjection, which have already been laid before you. I have produced, from our Lord's own words, more of clear, copious, and direct proof, that *Christ is not God*, than can be produced to prove that any other person mentioned in the Gospels is not God. If, notwithstanding all this, Christ really was God, then his most solemn and reiterated expressions, and his most deliberate acts are calculated to mislead: we can never expect to reach the hidden meaning of his words, and may close the Gospel in despair. This is strong language; but I have laid a firm and broad foundation of facts to support it.

And what is the way in which the advocates of the Trinity attempt to turn aside the force of the countless array of proofs, marshalled in opposition to their doctrine? They tell us that all these assertions are made with reference to *Christ's human nature* alone. "They are quite true," they say, "of the man Christ Jesus; but perfectly untrue if applied to God the Son!" I ask, do they find this affirmed in Scripture? Can they show a single instance in which Christ says, "That, I said as God — this, I now affirm as man. One assertion, I make in my human nature only — but it is not true of my divinity. Another, I have affirmed in my divine capacity — but it is not correct if assumed of my person viewed as man?" Such explanations are necessary to reconcile their creed with the

language of our Lord, and therefore they have recourse to them; but no such qualifications were required to reconcile the statements of our Saviour with each other — and he never adopted them. Nothing like these phrases can be found in the Gospels, or in the whole New Testament. They are a human invention — a device to get rid of a difficulty; a clumsy device, or rather a miserable subterfuge. What can be more wretched in argument than to assert, that, although Christ broadly and unreservedly proclaimed, "MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I," he was yet at that very moment *God, equal with the Father?* What more miserable than to be obliged to affirm, that although he declared *his ignorance* of the exact time of the destruction of Jerusalem, he was at that very moment the Omniscient God — and as such acquainted with all events, times, and circumstances? What can be more pitiable than to be driven to the necessity of arguing, that, although the Saviour expressly informed his disciples, that "*to sit on his right hand and on his left was not his to grant*," he was, notwithstanding this, the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, possessed of all majesty and power, and able to dispense every reward and gratification within the compass of boundless might? This is the way that men *explain* the Scriptures, or rather that they torture, that they abuse, that they pervert the Scriptures. They read the declarations of our Lord as magicians are said to read their prayers; they turn the volume upside down, and invert every sentence it contains. This may be called *explaining* the Scriptures; but it is explaining them in a way that no other book ever was or ever could be explained. I am well

assured that were I compelled to resort to such *explanations*, in order to reconcile the sacred volume with my creed, I should be told that I was not explaining Scripture, but burlesquing it — contradicting it — contradicting the Saviour, and making him contradict himself. Such an interpretation put upon his language does in fact, though unconsciously on the part of those who have learned it by rote, and repeat it without thinking it necessary to annex ideas to the language they employ, make the Son of God stoop to concealment, mental reservation, duplicity, deception and fraud. I am called upon, therefore, as a Minister of Christ, to denounce such interpretations with all the force that I can exert, consistently with my acknowledgment of a good intention on the part of those who use them. Even warmth would be excusable, when the object is to vindicate the truth of the Saviour. I believe Jesus himself would have made little distinction between those who would have aspersed his moral character and those who assailed his life; and, in the spirit of his own most admirable prayer, I say for them who have been unconsciously betrayed into such conduct "*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!*"

But our Trinitarian brethren say they are driven into this extraordinary method of interpretation, by finding it necessary in order to reconcile two different classes of texts. There are, they tell us, some passages in which Christ claims equality with the Father, and some in which he confesses inferiority; and they think the conflicting declarations may be harmonized, by assuming the complex view of his person which their theory asserts. And how, then, does their theory reconcile this contradiction, supposing such to exist? It leaves it exactly where it

was. It leaves the two conflicting propositions staring each other in the face. This is not the way to reconcile apparent contradictions, but to create real ones

But I deny that there is any necessity for this or any other theory for any such purpose. The declarations of our Lord are consistent, uniform, express, and very intelligible. Never was there a teacher whose language less required the dangerous aid of such a metaphysical theory, for the purpose of reconciling his declarations with each other. This cannot fail to strike every candid mind, when the passages supposed to inculcate the doctrine of his Supreme Deity are fairly presented to its view. For they are not plain and express assertions of his Godhead, or of his Double Nature; they are not like the numerous assertions of his inferiority which have been already enumerated, but statements, which are every one capable of another and a much more obvious as well as reasonable explanation. Christ never affirmed that he was Almighty God: he never declared to his disciples or to the Jews that he was JEHOVAH whom their fathers served: he never taught that the two Natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, were united in his one person for ever — so that he was equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, but inferior to the Father as touching his manhood. Had such declarations as these proceeded from him, there would indeed have been some excuse for applying that strange method of explaining language to which I have adverted. But such assertions he never made. The passages supposed to prove his Deity all relate to other subjects; and the arguments built upon them are *mere inferences*, and inferences which seem to me most unnatural and improbable, as may appear by considering a

very few by way of example. I shall select the strongest that I can find.

For example, we are told that Christ, by necessary implication, claims the attribute of Omnipotence in John v. 19; where he says, — "*What things soever* he [Father] *doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*" But that this is a groundless inference, is manifest from reading these words with their context. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you,* THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, *but what he seeth the Father do; for whatsoever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and* SHOWETH *him all things that himself doeth,* &c. It is obvious, that the meaning is, — the Son presumes to do nothing but what he sees the Father do; and what the Father wills to be done, the Son obediently fulfils.

Again, we are told, our Saviour must be God, because he asserts his Unity with the Father, by saying, — *I and the Father are One,*" John x. 30. This argument supposes that no kind of Unity can possibly subsist between two persons but *a unity of essence;* whereas, it is certain, that a unity of *will, consent,* or *operation,* is very frequently spoken of, both in Scripture and in other compositions. Thus, in John xvii. 21, 22, the Saviour prays, that all the members of his Church "*may be One,*" even as he and the Father were one; and that the expresssion is of the very same import in John x. 30, is evident from the context. "*My sheep . . . . shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* [For] *my Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* [And] *I and my Father are one.*" That is, "I

am acting in close compliance with his will, and under his protection; so that, to pluck them from me would be to pluck them from the hand of God." In fact, I cannot find an instance in Scripture, where this expression denotes identity of substance.

We are referred to our Saviour's answer to Philip's request, that our Lord would make the Father manifest unto his disciples. "*Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,*" John xiv. 9. These words, however, are exactly parallel to those which he more than once employed to his disciples. "*He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.*" No one here supposes our Lord to assert, that his Father, himself, and his disciples, were numerically the same substance; but only, that they were joined together in so near a relationship, as engaged in the same grand undertaking, that any act, either of friendship or enmity, performed to any one, even the humblest, would be considered and treated as if done to all. In this sense, our Saviour himself illustrates his own expression in the remainder of his address to Philip. "*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works,*" (ver. 10.) Our Lord's expression, therefore, signifies, — that he who was acquainted with *his* word and doctrine, was acquainted with the will and counsel of the Father; for he had only taught as his Father had commissioned and commanded him. Had Philip understood him to assert an identity of essence with the Father, he would have

started back with alarm and astonishment; but, on the contrary, he appears not to have testified even the most moderate degree of surprise.

These are among *the very strongest* of the assertions of our Lord, which are supposed to prove his Deity. In my mind, the arguments built upon them are utterly futile and vain. There are several other arguments of the same kind, but, after what has been already said, none of them can occasion the least difficulty to any reflecting mind; and it would be equally tedious and useless to occupy your time in a minute examination of them.

It is not easy to know where to stop in a discourse of this kind, — where the field is ample, the materials abundant, and the argument most inviting, — but I must not trespass unduly on your time. I have now shown you, by proofs most copious and clear, that our Blessed Lord never taught the doctrine of a Trinity; that he never taught the doctrine of his own Supreme Deity; that he never inculcated the Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost, or of any other except the Father only. I have shown you that he knew nothing even of the terms which are necessary to express these doctrines; that the Jews never accused him of having taught them; that his familiar friends never suspected him of having maintained them. I have shown that the proofs which are alleged on the other side, from the words of our Lord, are utterly untenable and futile. Here I might leave the argument; for, if Christ be the Author and Finisher of our faith, his declarations must be of the highest authority, and his judgment the ultimate standard appeal in all matters of religious belief. If Christ has taught the Unitarian Faith, then to us, as Christians, Unitarianism is demon-

strated to be the truth. Nevertheless, as some persons may imagine that our Saviour did not, during his life, propound the whole system of the Faith on this subject, but left it to be completed by his Apostles after his ascension, I shall consider in the two next lectures, what was the doctrine actually promulgated by the Apostles of our Lord; and I think I shall be able to satisfy candid inquirers that it also, was a Pure Unitarian Faith.

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A

DISCOURSE

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF

REV. HENRY WARE, JR., D.D.,

By Rev. CHANDLER ROBBINS.

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J. R. BUTTS, PRINTER,
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DISCOURSE.

REV. XIV. 13.

"And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

These consoling and emphatic words, which come up to remembrance on the death of every faithful Christian, have never appeared to me more applicable, than on the occasion of that recent bereavement, which is felt throughout our churches, but nowhere so sincerely as in this. At the first announcement of the decease of my esteemed predecessor in this pulpit, I heard a voice as from Heaven, saying unto me, 'Write, Blessed is he.' The voice was strong and clear. It gave no uncertain sound. It left no misgivings. It spake with the authority of a divine monition. 'Write no funereal lament: Utter no mournful wail: Take a strain of peaceful triumph; Breathe over his grave a Christian's requiem: He hath died in the Lord: Write, Blessed is he.' 'Yea,' said the Spirit, 'for he hath rested from his labors.' And the heart, though sorrowing for his removal, responded 'Amen.'

The good providence of God, which has permitted us

to assemble this day for His worship, admonishes us also to take suitable notice of the death of His servant, a former Pastor of this Christian church. It calls upon us to commemorate and improve this bereavement, by such a consideration of it as may be appropriate to our own feelings, to the character of the departed, to this altar of his ministry, to this flock of his prayers, and, if possible to the purposes of the Master whom he served, and the will of the God whom he adored. We feel that this is not the presence — that his was not the character, for empty panegyric. But the language of inspiration, as well as the testimony of our reason and the voice of our highest affections, tells us, that the "memory of the just is blessed." For the benefit of the living, we would retrace the pilgrimage of the virtuous dead. And whilst we speak soberly and justly of their characters and works, we feel that we are not eulogizing them, but exalting goodness, and giving glory to Him whose grace has made them what they were.

In this place, which was the home of Mr. Ware's religious affections, and before this people, to many of whom he was endeared as a spiritual father and friend, there is no circumstance of his life, the record of which would not be appropriate and interesting. His history from first to last would bear the strictest scrutiny. If its minutest incidents, which have faded from the recollection of his friends, and his most private thoughts and actions, of which no human eye has taken knowledge, could all be brought out into the light before us, I am confident that they would but illustrate his purity, and raise our appreciation of his affections and his principles. The nearer we can come to the good man, the more

beautiful are the views which his character presents. His aims are far nobler than his acts — the secrets of his inner life, more lovely than his expressions. If his works honor him, his thoughts and plans, could they be unveiled to us, how much more! His best deeds but poorly manifest his better intents; and the richest gems of virtue, which sparkle along his path, but half reveal to his companions the richer treasures of his heart. His career is manifestly upward, but his aspirations after perfection are unseen. In great emergencies men behold him upright — but in the little transactions of every day they know not how sublime is his reference. The world acknowledges his godly actions, and the ear bears witness to his heavenly words, but he is alone on the mount, when he converses with God, and the door of his closet is shut upon the holiest exercises of his devotion and love.

The plainest representations of Mr. Ware's daily actions would be the most beautiful delineation of his character, his highest eulogy. No fanciful touches could portray to us so distinctly the finest traits of his moral life. No studied words of ours bring his inner man so near to our minds and hearts.

It will therefore be my endeavor to present to you, in the most truthful language, a few sketches of his actual life, and more particularly of his doings in connexion with this parish — where, above all his other spheres of duty, his best influence was exerted, and his most excellent qualities were displayed. I feel that such is the most valuable monument which my great love for him can build. I know that such is the most acceptable tribute to his memory, which your own gratitude to him can desire at my feeble hands.

Henry Ware, Jr. was born in Hingham, Mass. on the 21st of April, 1794. His infancy enjoyed the nurture and the hallowing influences of a christian pastor's home. His first lessons were the gentle precepts of the Gospel. The instructions of wisdom — commended to him by those parental lips, from which they have continued, even unto this day, to distil as the dew upon the characters of the young — found a ready access to his heart. The first love of his childhood was that sacred business of his Father in heaven, in which the strength of his prime was spent, and to which his latest affections clung. The most intimate companions of his early days can recollect no period of his life, when the office of the Christian ministry was not his ruling desire and aim. He seemed to regard himself, like some Prophet of old, to have been consecrated from his birth to the service of the Temple. This sacred purpose stamped the character of his boyhood and youth. His feelings and actions were to a remarkable degree consistent with it. His lips refrained from impure and irreverent speech. His taste revolted at every shape of iniquity. He washed his hands in innocency. He entered not into unholy paths, but turned from them and passed away.

This *pure boyhood*, this unspotted youth, what a fit and beautiful foundation for a holy priesthood! Through such a path, he ascended at length into the hill of the Lord and stood in His holy place. Through such stages of early preparation, my friends, the unseen hand of Providence led him along until his feet rested at your own altar, and his unstained hands were appointed to break to you the holy bread. How favored the Church that had the best prayers and choicest labors of such a

minister! How happy the minister who could look back upon such a blameless life!*

From the schools of his native town, he was transferred at an early age to the family and tuition of the Rev. Dr. Allyn of Duxbury, a man whose eccentricity was not more remarkable than his worth; whose erudition was not greater than his kindness — the pleasing remembrance of whom is fresh, at this day, in the hearts of many, whose characters still preserve the valuable impress of his discipline. With this friend and ministerial associate of his father he remained, till the appointment of the latter to the Hollis professorship in Harvard College; when he was removed, with the rest of his family, to Cambridge. Here he enjoyed, for about two years, the private instruction of his cousin, the present Judge Ware of Portland. After this, he was sent, for a year, to the Academy at Andover, to finish his preparation for the college at Cambridge, at which he received matriculation in August, 1808.

* Several anecdotes, which have been preserved by his family, might be related here, to illustrate the statement I have made, relative to his early predilection for the ministry. I will mention but one, which was recalled to the mind of his aged father, upon hearing, the evening after the foregoing discourse was preached, an account of what had been said upon this subject.

When Henry was quite a small lad, before the family had removed from Hingham, it was his favorite amusement to "*play*" the preacher. On one occasion, when the children were amusing themselves in the garret, his father, softly opening the door, surprised them all seated with an air of solemnity around the youthful prophet, who, with a cradle standing upon one end before him, for a pulpit, was reading the Bible to the rest, with the same gravity of tone and manner which, in later years, has impressed larger and older congregations.

As an undergraduate, his respectable talents and attainments as a scholar confirmed the respect, which his purity of mind and correctness of deportment conciliated from all. The most worthy of his companions in study were his chosen associates and friends; and, though none of them, perhaps, predicted the eminence which he would attain in his profession, no one doubted what that profession would be, nor questioned his moral adaptation for its sacred duties.

After graduating in the usual course, with the honorable appointment of a Poem, at the commencement of 1812, he immediately commenced his theological studies, in connexion with the office of Assistant Instructer in the Academy at Exeter. Having retained his connexion with this institution for two years, he withdrew, to complete his education for the ministry — as the custom was before the establishment of the Theological School — as a resident graduate at Cambridge.

I find, in the records of the Boston association of ministers, a notice of his examination and approbation as a preacher, on the 31st of July, 1815, about a year and a half before his ordination as your minister.

The first action of this society in relation to Mr. Ware was — after having heard him preach for several Sabbaths, as a candidate, in connexion with others — on the 3d of November, 1816; at which time it was voted to appoint a meeting on the second Sunday following, for the purpose of choosing a minister. In conformity to the usage at that period, the Church assembled on the previous Thursday, and unanimously elected your late lamented pastor; which election was confirmed on the next Sabbath, at a meeting of the Church and Proprietors, by

a vote of thirty-six ballots, against ten, divided between two other candidates.

The reply to the invitation of the parish, dated November 27, was written in that spirit of humility in the estimate of his own abilities, and of perfect reliance upon a Higher power, which always characterized its author. The ordination took place on the first day of the year 1817 — his father preaching the sermon, and his respected instructer, Dr. Allyn, giving the charge.

The day of the consecration of this sacred tie will ever be a memorable era in the history of this ancient church. For several previous years, owing, amongst other unfavorable circumstances, in part to the age and infirmities of Dr. Lathrop, this society had suffered a material diminution of numbers and vitality. But God had henceforth in store for it better things, than even the glowing anticipations of the new preacher's most sanguine friends ventured to predict. Entering upon his arduous work with no startling exhibitions of eloquence or zeal, with no straining for sudden effect, but with a devoted purpose to be laborious and faithful, and a single eye to the sacred objects of the ministry, the first fruits of his well sustained efforts gradually and steadily ripened around him. The spiritual and external interests of the parish advanced with a regular and healthy growth. Another golden age like that which it had enjoyed under the first of the Mathers, dawned upon the prospects of the church.* The

* Increase Mather, D. D., was minister of the Second Church from 1664 to 1723,— *fifty-nine* years. The admissions to "full communion" during this period were not far from one thousand, — or about sixteen a year. From 1688 to 1691, the number of admissions was one hundred and forty-eight, divided thus between the several years,— 22, 32, 39, 55.

throng of worshippers swelled from Sabbath to Sabbath. The influence of the pulpit became more powerful and deep. Its invitations to holiness became more persuasive; its calls to duty more stirring; its appeals to the conscience more pungent; its discourses to the understanding more convincing; its addresses to the affections more constraining. The sinful were converted; the weak strengthened; the skeptical satisfied; the sorrowful consoled; the obdurate softened; the indifferent quickened; the penitent encouraged; the righteous confirmed and edified — and all loved the voice that counselled, and the hand that led them. The aged more frequently dignified the congregation with their silvery crowns, and the young enlivened it with their blooming brows. The ordinances rejoiced and shed abroad their divinest odors. The beautiful bands of love and peace spread and strengthened from heart to heart. The joyous cry of Christian activity went round. The holy vine grew verdant in all its branches.

I speak to those, who can pass judgment upon the truth of my words. I speak to many, who can remember the connexion of Mr. Ware with this society, from its commencement to its close. And I know that their impressions of the best years of his ministry will authorize the strongest language I have used in describing the effect of his influence, when it was at its height. I believe that there could not have been found in our denomination, at the period to which I refer, a parish more prosperous, or a ministry more effective than his. There were more splendid edifices than these old walls, which loved the echoes of his impressive voice. There were more wealthy and fashionable and highly cultivated congregations than

that, which gathered around him, with attentive faces and captivated hearts. There were more graceful rhetoricians, and more learned theologians, occupying the sacred desk. But where was there a Temple more fragrant with the breath of devotion, more beautiful with the spiritual adornings of holiness and peace? Where was there a society more harmonious, or more engaged? And where was the preacher, whose whole air, and action, and tones, were more suited to the messages of Heaven, whose discourses and whose prayers had more power of moral and spiritual effect?

But his influence was not confined to the pulpit. It may even be a question, whether it was so deeply felt through his public ministrations, as in his pastoral intercourse. He esteemed both these means of usefulness as of equal claims upon the minister, and alike essential to his success. He used them both conjointly with eminent fidelity and skill, turning each to the other's account, and bringing both together to bear upon individual character. In my intercourse with the families that were under his charge, my impression is, that I have found more frequent and emphatic testimony to his excellence as a Pastor, than as a Preacher. Where the definite recollection of his sermons has faded, the exact words that he has uttered in the sick chamber, or to the mourner's ear, have been indelibly engraven on grateful memories. But if I distrusted such evidence as this, or the correctness of my own impression, I am furnished with a stronger and an affecting testimony to the same effect. In the last communication addressed by this parish to Mr. Ware, accompanying the announcement of the vote by which their connexion was dissolved, whilst the value of his services

in the pulpit is directly alluded to, in a single though an emphatic sentence, whole paragraphs are occupied with the mention of his pastoral faithfulness.

"In reviewing," say the committee, "the circumstances of our connexion, we look back upon the events of many years, endeared to us and our families, by the memory of your kindness, your sympathy, and your Christian fidelity. In sickness and sorrow, how often have you come to us with the comforts and hopes of the Gospel. In the day of our prosperity, how has the value of the good granted us been increased by your rejoicing together with us, and leading us to make it the occasion of a greater good hereafter. How often, in our afflictions, have we leaned upon you; and while we have been comforted, have been taught to put our trust in Him who is able to save. How have we seen the eye of the dying, when the light of life was fading from it, turned upwards to that brighter light from Heaven; and the heart of the mourner set upon that better mansion, which our Master has gone to prepare. And if occasions have sometimes occurred, in which we were divided in opinion, and had begun to be alienated in feeling, how have our differences ceased, when you have come among us, in the spirit and influence of the Gospel of peace. It is pleasant to us to dwell upon these recollections. They are deeply seated in our inmost breasts; and mingled as they are with the image of your truth, and love, and faithfulness, they can never leave us." No, my friends, I can bear witness, they *have* never left you. Those words were not lightly nor formally written. The truest and deepest sentiment of this parish uttered itself in them. Those recollections, to which your committee referred, have become only the more

pleasant to you by the lapse of years. Time has confirmed and hallowed, not obliterated them. I have found them still fresh — cherished, like flowers, which a departed friend has planted — by every fireside where my predecessor sat, and in every path where his beautiful feet carried good tidings.

But the intercourse of the fireside, and the instructions of the Sabbath, were not the only instruments by which Mr. Ware edified his flock. His affectionate and ever laborious zeal sought out still other channels of religious influence. Of these, none was more valued by himself, or by his people, and none more efficacious, than a meeting for Christian improvement and exposition of the Scriptures, which was held in the evening, in the old vestry in the tower of this church. That "upper room," which is now cheerless and deserted, was in former days "furnished and prepared," and regarded, in the associations of many, as a very "guest chamber," for the entertainment of the Saviour and his disciples. The little company collected there, after the toils of the day were over, above the noises of earth, and still further above its vanities, sitting at the feet of their teacher, who was meek and lowly like his Master, realized, if two or three met in his name *ever* realized, the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise; felt that he was in the midst of them, and received into their spirits the benediction of his peace. Many precious seeds were sown in that narrow field; some of which have since ripened into virtuous characters on the earth, and not a few are bearing the fruits of immortality in some brighter world.

In one of the last conversations, which I held with Mr. Ware, his thoughts, as was always the case when we

were together, reverted to his old parish; but on that occasion with more than usual interest. I had never heard him express his affection for it so warmly. There was an unwonted tenderness in his tones. The pent up feelings of years seemed to pour forth in a few glowing words. The habitual reserve, which covered the strong emotions, whose existence in his bosom no one could doubt, was for the time forgotten. The veil, that spread before the sacred treasures of his soul, was for a moment lifted up. He told me of those persons and scenes, whose images were nearest to his heart. He told me of those hours and occasions of his ministry, which were of dearest remembrance. And amongst them all, and, as he said, most beautiful and precious of all, were the friends who had stood near him in that humble room, and the evenings that were there spent in social devotion. I shall never forget the emphasis with which he said, "The two happiest evenings of my life," and repeated, "yes, the two happiest of my life, were, one of them when we had met to converse upon the Lord's Supper, and the vestry was so full, that we were obliged to adjourn to the church; and the other, when, after an interesting discussion, we sang together at parting, as if every soul present felt the grandeur and joyousness of the sentiment, the hymn which concludes with this glorious verse," which he then repeated,

> "Then let our songs abound,
> And every tear be dry,
> We 're marching through Immanuel's ground
> To fairer worlds on high."

He did not, on this occasion, allude to another service of his own institution — of which, however, he has more frequently spoken, and to which he has repeatedly shown

his attachment, by returning to its celebration, since it has come into other hands, — I allude to the Lecture at the Close of the Year; a sacred and affecting occasion; which has always been associated with his image, and will be henceforth still more intimately — an occasion which I hope may be solemnly kept by our children, when we, like him, shall be safe from the wear and injury of years — an occasion which I pray may never become obsolete in the Second Church, so long as it has a name amongst the members of Christ. Mr. Ware was peculiarly qualified to do justice to a service like this. His feelings were alive to all the solemn and elevating influences of the hour. His spirit easily sympathized with its deep religious influence. He interpreted its solemn lessons as a prophet would interpret the symbols of momentous truth. His preaching was never more impressive than on these occasions. The most powerful of his published sermons was delivered at the close of the year 1826. The memory of that discourse and that night will go with many of us to our graves. My own impressions of Mr. Ware, as a preacher, were stamped at that time — once for all, and forever. The fame of his preaching, mingled, perhaps, with some chastened feelings, and some desires reaching after the Eternal, had drawn a little company of my classmates from Cambridge to this church. We stood in the crowded gallery. The preacher's subject was the "duty of improvement"— a theme most applicable to the characters and feelings of the young. Every word, and tone, and gesture were calculated powerfully to impress the youthful mind. But the closing sentences, especially, came home to the heart with a thrilling effect. Their sounds lingered on the ears of

hundreds throughout that night. Their distant echoes come back to me now. No words from mortal lips ever affected me like those. I can see his very look — I can hear his very tone, as, with the unction of a Paul, he uttered the solemn charge, with which that discourse concludes. "I charge you, as in the presence of God, who sees and will judge you — in the name of Jesus Christ, who beseeches you to come to him and live — by all your hopes of happiness and life — I charge you let not this year die, and leave you impenitent. Do not dare to utter defiance on its decaying hours. But, in the stillness of its awful midnight, prostrate yourselves penitently before your Maker; and let the morning sun rise upon you, thoughtful and serious men."

A favorite purpose of Mr. Ware was to advance the interests of benevolence and religion in his congregation through the instrumentality of the church. He heartily loved the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, not only as beautifully commemorative of the Saviour, but as, in connexion with its associations, one of the most important means of individual and social improvement. He commended it frequently and affectionately, in public and in private, to his people. He faithfully used all judicious measures to increase the number of communicants. But his idea of the responsibilities and duties of church membership was not answered by a mere observance of the rite, however reverential, even though coupled with a personal character, however blameless. His own words will best express his own opinions. I quote them as they stand on the records of the church, in the report of a committee, appointed to inquire what should be done to increase its prosperity.

"The great principle, on which the prosperity and edification of the church must depend, appears to your committee to have been entirely overlooked, in the general habits of all the churches with which we are connected. This is the *principle of association, union, sympathy, cooperation.* The church is in its very essence *an association.* Its very design and constitution is to effect the purposes of personal improvement, and to extend the influence of religion, by mutual counsel, aid, and coöperation. Hence the apostles emphatically call it *one body, and its members, members one of another.* If this be forgotten, and, instead of a constant union in worship and action, Christians only meet infrequently at the table of the Lord, this primary purpose is lost sight of, and it cannot therefore be expected that the greatest religious prosperity should be attained. When Jesus framed the model of his church, he in a manner set the example, the first example, of that union, by systematic association, which has since been extended so far, and has wrought such powerful effects in the world. And is it then consistent, that the church should be the first to relinquish this principle? And must it not be expected to become weak and inefficient by abandoning it, just in proportion as it first became strong by adhering to it? Let us then henceforth resolve to regard this church as an association, actually and actively united for the accomplishment of religious and benevolent purposes."

I have recited these words, my friends, because they appear to me worthy of especial notice. It is certainly remarkable to find that, twenty years ago, Mr. Ware brought out so distinctly, and attempted to put into practice in his own church, those very ideas, which have re-

cently come up as new to our denomination, which are attracting considerable attention, and which are regarded by some, as if they were ultimately to regenerate and remodel our churches. If there be any valuable movement amongst us, on these principles and under the guidance of such ideas, towards a more perfect realization of Christ's plan of church feeling and action, I am not sure but that the credit of setting it on foot might be traced back to my predecessor.

The flower of Mr. Ware's affections, and the best fruits of his labors, were consecrated to his own society. But his influence and energies, though concentrated upon this parish, were not restricted within its limits. The only horizon, which bounded his benevolence, was the broad circle of human want. The only tether, which his virtuous activity could brook, was the strong chain of necessity, fastened to us by Him, who wisely limited the faculties of man — who gave to the largest souls as feeble bodies as the rest, that they might learn to be patient and humble. Every valuable enterprise of the Christian body to which he belonged, if it did not originate with his active spirit, was quickened by his zeal or directed by his wisdom. Of the American Unitarian Association he was one of the founders, and for eleven years, as Foreign Secretary, or on the Executive Committee, a laborious officer. The Evangelical Missionary Society is to no individual so greatly indebted, whether for the constancy of his support, or the amount of his collections. Of the Ministry at large in this city — though others may have the praise — Mr. Ware is virtually the father. I take delight in mentioning the fact, that, for several years before Dr. Tuckerman came to the city, or the ministry was in-

troduced to public discussion, the pastor of this church, amidst the pressure of his duties, did himself, from time to time, collect and preach to little assemblies of the poor, and lead on, as a master-spirit, the small band of young men, in whose benevolent breasts the embryo idea and plan of this institution were warming and unfolding into life and substance.

But to enumerate all the religious Associations of which he was a member, would be but to exhaust their catalogue. The cause of Peace found in him a kindred spirit and a fervid tongue. The cause of Freedom was near to his heart — and if some of its more ardent votaries had, years ago, listened to the suggestions of meek wisdom and considerate charity, which he offered to bring to their conventions, it is my firm conviction, that the evil, which they oppose, would have been at this day nearer to its end. To the greatest reform of the age, he gave his strong and undeviating aid — an aid the value of which may be illustrated by the fact, that the *twelfth thousand* of his Discourse on Temperance, which had an extensive circulation in this country, is now exposed for sale in the capital of the British Empire. The interests of Education, also, were not only fostered by his favoring words, but substantially advanced by his writings and his labors.

In fine, his heart had a warm pulse for every claim of charity. His lips had a tone of truthful and earnest eloquence for every need of man. His feet were never weary of running on missions of mercy. He never withheld his hands from any work of love, when it was in their power to do it. No thought of himself enticed him from the sacrifices of kindness. The fatigues of benevo-

lence were the exhilaration of his days — the weariness of duty the anodyne of his nights.

But the aggregated labors of love, which his spirit courted, were too heavy a load for the flesh to bear. Indeed, the body would have sooner given way beneath it, but for the sincere delight which its pressure gave to his heart.

In the beginning of the year 1828, Mr. Ware's health, which had for a long time given signs of failure, began seriously to decline. The fears of the parish were excited, and its sympathy manifested by every indulgence it could render. But his disease increased to such an extent, as to satisfy him that he must relinquish his duties for many months, and to cause some apprehensions that he might be taken from them forever. Under these circumstances, he addressed a letter to his parishioners on the last Sunday of the year 1828, the twelfth year of his ministry, tendering the resignation of his office, and asking, that their connexion might immediately be dissolved. "I feel," he says, "that I ought to hesitate no longer. I ought to relieve you from the uncertainty and trials of your present condition. And I ought to relieve myself from those solicitudes on your behalf, which do not avail to your benefit, and which are unfavorable to my own restoration to strength. In doing this, I perform one of the most painful acts of my life. My situation has satisfied every wish of my heart. Other men may have labored more faithfully and successfully; but no one can ever have looked back upon twelve years of a happier connexion."

This communication was received, as the records of the parish certify, with "excited feelings of deep sympa-

thy, regret, and disappointed hopes." A committee was appointed to take it into consideration. Their report is a document most flattering to the taste and the feelings of the gentlemen by whom it was prepared. I would most gladly repeat it here from beginning to end, but for the danger of encroaching, I will not say upon your patience, but upon the proprieties of this service. With several other papers, that have reference to the last days of Mr. Ware's pastoral connexion, it is worthy of the knowledge and remembrance of you all. A few sentences will show you its character and style, and also exhibit the action of the parish in relation to the subject which called it forth. "For twelve years he has given his strength, his time, his powers of mind and of body, by night and by day, to us. We believe that, in sincerity, in fidelity, in constancy and disinterestedness, his services have been without example. He has always cared for us, for our families, and for our children, more than for himself. He has spared himself no trouble; he has omitted no occasion of doing us good. He has worn himself out in our service. And now, when his health is gone and his strength has failed, he comes to render back his office into our hands, and asks to depart in peace, that as he can do no more for us, he may not come between us and our welfare, and we may be relieved from the burden of his support.

"In this state of things, we believe we give utterance to the single and universal feeling of his people when we say, that we cannot consent to the separation. 'We are not yet willing to give Mr. Ware up.' We therefore unanimously recommend, that our pastor be desired to remain with us; and that measures be taken for the

choice of some person of piety and ability, in whom we may unite, to be his colleague; to assist him in the discharge of his duties, and share with him the burdens of his office."

The recommendation of the committee was sanctioned by the parish, and cordially approved by Mr. Ware; and on the 11th of January, 1829, the office of colleague was filled by the election of Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who received ordination on the 11th of the following March. About this time, Mr. Ware received, from the Corporation of Harvard University, an appointment to the Professorship of Pulpit Eloquence and the Pastoral Care, — a professorship founded by the subscriptions of individuals, as much out of respect to the proposed incumbent, as for the sake of the benefits of such an office. On the 27th of March, this intelligence was conveyed to the parish, in a letter from the senior pastor, coupled with the information of his intention to try the effect upon his health of a foreign tour.

The last Sabbath before embarking for Europe he was present in this desk; but in so enfeebled a state, as to disqualify him for taking any other part in the service, save the reading of two stanzas of a favorite hymn. But the devotional breathings of the inimitable lyric poet, which are embalmed for immortality in those beautiful verses, expressed what was then passing in the heart of the reader, more clearly and happily, perhaps, than any discourse which he could have delivered. The aged friend, who has pointed out to me this hymn, and who bears the occasion in clearest remembrance, has told me, what I can easily imagine, that its reading was listened to by the whole congregation with tears.

May peace attend thy gate,
And joy within thee wait,
To bless the soul of every guest;
The man who seeks thy peace,
And wishes thine increase,
A thousand blessings on him rest.

My tongue repeats her vows,
"Peace to this sacred house!"
For here my friends and brethren dwell;
And since my glorious God
Makes thee His blest abode,
My soul shall ever love thee well.*

From the spring of 1829 to the summer of 1830, Mr. Ware was travelling in Europe. It was a tour, not of relaxation only, but of rich improvement to his mind and heart. Nearly his whole pathway through foreign lands was smoothed by kindness, and enlivened by hospitality. The homes of strangers were opened to him, in his absence from his own. New friendships were established in almost every city and town in which he tarried, — friendships, some of which were afterwards continued across the ocean, and will be renewed beyond the grave. Important information was collected in regard to the state and prospects of Liberal Christianity, and new ties of sympathy and respect were woven between our toiling fellow Christians in Great Britain and their less molested

* I have been informed, that at the communion, which was administered on the day alluded to, Mr. Ware, although positively forbidden by his physician to risk the effort of speaking, could not restrain his desire to say a parting word. He made a brief address, which, to use the strong expression of my informant,— who alluded to the description I had given of the effect of the hymn upon the congregation — "was heard not with tears only but with sobs."

brethren here. Henceforth, the person and the name of Henry Ware will be as dear in the mother country as in this, and the intelligence of his death will be received with as unfeigned demonstrations of respect. With the single exception of Dr. Channing, there is no preacher of our denomination, whose works have been so extensively circulated beyond the Atlantic, or whose influence is so valuable and so deep.

Soon after his return from Europe, Mr. Ware entered upon his new office at Cambridge, and tendered his resignation to his parish with the strongest expressions of gratitude for their kindness, and of interest in their future well being; and a vote was passed, with a full response of esteem and love, dissolving the pastoral connection from and after the third day of October, 1830.

So closed that sacred, that happy relation. Then, was the heavenly record of its transactions sealed up, for the Judgment of the Great Day. On the part of the Minister, the breaking of that seal may well have been anticipated with humble, yet joyful confidence. He was faithful to his sacred trust. He declared to you the whole counsel of God. He ceased not to exhort, and instruct, and warn you, night and day. He led you, and guided, and loved you, as a father his children, — as a shepherd his flock. He went in and out before you in the purity of a blameless conversation, in the activity of a laborious service, in an affectionate imitation of Jesus, in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Peace. God grant that on the part of the People also, the opening of that book may be an occasion of equal rejoicing. But if it be too much to expect that the fidelity of you all, in hearing and doing the word of God, was equal to

his, in proclaiming and exemplifying it, — of this one thing at least, I do not ask to be assured, — that when, amidst the awful solemnities of the final reckoning, that seal shall be broken, it will not be found charged against any member of this society, that he did not respect and love his minister.

From this period, we follow Mr. Ware into a new sphere of duty, yet one for which no better qualification could have been found, than the experience he had earned in the old. Having made full proof, in his own case, of the joys and trials of the ministry, he knew how to encourage and how to warn. Having thoroughly learned what acquirements are most valuable, and what plans of action most successful; having tried every key to the heart, and found the great springs of moral and religious effect, he was thoroughly furnished with that practical knowledge, which, in an office like his, is above all price. He carried with him, moreover, what no erudition can supply, the pattern and influence of his own spirit and example, in both the branches of clerical duty which he had been appointed to teach.

Of the value of the services of Mr. Ware in the Theological School, and the estimate in which he was held by its students, I might speak from personal observation and experience. But I cannot trust myself to do so. I fear that none, who were not actually subject to his instruction and counsels, would appreciate what my feelings might prompt me to utter. I should dread to appear to be merely eulogizing *him*. The voice of the graduates from that Institution has ever been but one. In that voice of the heart, let all that I would say be told.

But at Cambridge, as well as in Boston, it was the lot

of Mr. Ware to be overburdened with useful occupations, partly of his own seeking, but partly also by the inconsideration and importunity of others. If his friends have sometimes lamented that he was not more sparing of his strength, have they never had reason to accuse themselves of indiscretion, in encroaching so much upon his time, and pressing so many offices upon his ready will? The amount and variety of labor, which attached to his public office, was alone too great for the strongest constitution to endure; but the multiplicity of private demands upon his feelings, and thoughts, and time, was altogether beyond our enumeration or conception. Every one has heard of the excess of his engagements during his active ministry here. And it has been continually told, that he shortened the days of his usefulness, whilst he was your pastor, by crowding into a few years, works enough to make an ordinary lifetime laborious. The general supposition has been, that *this* field was too hard for him, and that if he had continued in it, he would sooner have found his grave. But regard for the truth compels me to contradict this opinion. His constitution was indeed greatly impaired by his ordinary and extraordinary services as your minister. But it was not these alone, nor chiefly, that made him old before his time, and crushed him down to the couch of death before his fiftieth year. He did not, my friends, as has been often supposed, exchange this parish for an easier sphere. The labors of his early manhood were not so abundant, nor so wearisome, as the labors of his latter years. In the service of the University, he staggered to his fall. Death stole upon him more swiftly in his professor's chair, than if he had stood in this sacred desk. Nay, at Cambridge there was hardly

thrown off a single duty that would have devolved upon him here, whilst, from the pressing necessities of the University and the Theological School, others and still others were offered to his too willing nature, and successively assumed by him, till flesh and heart sunk under their number and their variety.

Mr. Ware remained at Cambridge till the summer of 1842. At that time, hopeless of being able to continue his duties, he sought, but too late, for a home of quiet and peace in the retirement of the country. A kind Hand led him to a spot in every respect suited to his taste and his want; whither it seemed to him as if God had guided him at length, through floods and over rough places, to find a resting-place for his weary feet, beneath the olive-shade for which he had longed. Here, the grateful kindness of friends rejoiced to spread for him a table, and to plant for him fruit-bearing trees. Here, also, his domestic circle, which had aforetime enlarged and divided its endearments and its hospitality upon a multitude of strangers and friends, began to draw more closely and tenderly together; and, as it narrowed in, without any contraction of its love for others, enjoyed, to a still greater degree than before, the sweet and holy joys of its concentrated affections.

Yet even here he was not idle. From his retreat he looked out with an interested eye upon the movements of the busy world he had left behind him. Thoughts and plans of benevolence and usefulness floated through his tranquil mind. His pen, also, found employment suited to the quietness of his environment and his peaceful feelings, in portraying the character, and tracing the calm and holy life of the late venerable Dr. Worcester, who

has been so appropriately named the "Apostle of Peace." The concerns of the churches, in whose behalf he had so long labored, were not neglected; nor were the counsels, which were always so much sought after and valued by his brethren, withholden.

His mind, moreover, studious not only of action, but of some regular and continuous employment of a useful nature, embraced, at this time, with avidity, an undertaking which had offered itself to him, as peculiarly suited to his present condition, and which he purposed to make the leading business of coming years. I allude to the editorial charge of the most important Periodical of our denomination. His plans for the conduct of the Examiner were nearly completed, and were such, as, under his management, would not have failed to secure for it increased utility and favor. But the objects, to which he proposed to devote the work, were too noble and characteristic of his heart, not to be publicly declared. They show a spirit of disinterestedness, and zeal for the truth, as rare as they are admirable. He desired no personal emolument. He had determined to reserve from the profits of the undertaking, only enough for the maintenance of his family, in the exercise of the strictest frugality. The remainder it was his intention to set apart for religious and benevolent uses. In a letter to a publishing house in this city, with which he was making his arrangements, dated the 7th of June, 1843, he says, "I wish it to be understood, that I undertake the Examiner, for the sake of the *public cause*, and with a view to do the *utmost possible* for the public interest." And, in a still later communication, he reiterates the same idea, "you know it to be my purpose to make the work, as far

as possible, a great public instrument of *spreading truth*." The unfolding and arrangement of this plan afforded him, during the last six months of his life, such delight, as none but a mind so diligent, and at the same time so hampered by physical infirmities, can understand. The hope of being able to enter upon its execution with the commencement of a new year, appears to us now, as we look back, to have been most kindly granted him to beguile his days of wearisome inaction. It was indeed the brightest anticipation that cheered his gloomy forecast, — gloomy, only because of the thick clouds that were settling upon so many of his favorite paths of usefulness.

But a gentle Shepherd was leading him, in a steady advance, through green pastures, and by the side of still waters, down into the valley of the shadow of death. More than once, however, within the few last months, a friendly angel has been sent to accelerate his journey, and to give gentle and repeated warnings to his friends to be prepared for his removal. It touched, but without rudeness, the springs of his intellectual life. It disturbed, but without violence, the fountain of his affections, the Siloam which had healed and blessed so many. But disturbed as it was, the fountain flowed and sparkled still, for those who waited at its brink. His mind was often inwardly active, when all expression was denied him, and even when he was apparently asleep, was following passively the shadowy and dreamy flow of his fancy. "My mind," he would say, "is crowded with thoughts, precious thoughts of death and immortality," — thoughts which he longed to utter. In hours of perfect consciousness, he uniformly declared his conviction, that the time of his departure had come, the "fitting time," the "best time;"

and occasional allusions to the approaching change showed the peace and serenity of his mind. "It was," says one who never left him, "as when the parting of the clouds, on a dark evening, shows here and there a bright star in the space beyond, we know as well that the whole heaven is radiant with its countless myriads still, as if the whole atmosphere were clear and we saw them all." Not a word, not a look indicated a desire to return to life, and yet every precious memory of the past, every interest of the large circle of friends, that he loved, was as dear and as strong as ever. In one or two short intervals, between his continually lengthening seasons of seeming or entire unconsciousness, words of most precious import were spoken to his children, the impression of which can never be effaced. On one occasion in particular, the precise circumstances of which are of too sacred and private a character to be publicly described, warm and elevated expressions of gratitude to the Saviour, intermingled with affectionate addresses and counsels to his family, fell from his lips. His thoughts turned to the closing hours and acts of the Master whom he loved; and, speaking of the design of Jesus in instituting the last supper, as if inspired by the very spirit of His own boundless benevolence, he stretched out his feeble arms, saying, "He intended it for all, he would gather all to his embrace."

He was now constantly anticipating a sudden call to depart, for which nothing remained to be put in readiness; and there is no doubt, that he was aware of the time when the mandate came, and yielded himself up with a quiet and childlike submission. As Death came upon him, He threw gently over him the veil of deepest sleep, under which he lay for a few hours, still breathing, composed

and tranquil, whilst his spirit was loosing itself from its worn-out members, and sighing itself back to God.

How sweet the rest it found! What a zest has the repose of immortality after such a laborious life! What a beautiful convoy across the dark flood the smiling images of his holy works, which, the Spirit saith, attend the good man, as, on the buoyant wings of faith and hope, he floats from earth to heaven! "He hath died in the lord!" from henceforth how blessed! Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, thou shalt now be ruler over many things. Farewell, good soldier of Jesus Christ. Thou hast fought the good fight, thou hast finished thy course, thou hast kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for thee a crown of life.

And now, my friends, that I have traced my beloved predecessor, through the paths of his mortal pilgrimage, so far as they have been known to me, and as truthfully as I have been able, — what remains, but that I should endeavor, in a few words, to draw, from the scenes and actions through which we have followed him, a connected portrait of his character.

I approach this duty with a trembling hand. I never came near Mr. Ware whilst he lived, without a feeling of mingled reverence and love; and now that he is no more, I call up his moral image, I bring before me the likeness of his soul, with a still deeper emotion of sacredness and affection. If, whilst his spirit dwelt in the body; if, whilst its light beamed upon us through that benignant, and earnest eye; if, whilst it meditated beneath that tranquil and capacious brow; if, when it spoke through those persuasive and serious lips; if, when it drew near to us in the intercourse of friendship, with that unequalled

plainness and gentle dignity of manner, which so well became the guilelessness of its feeling, and the elevation of its intent; if, when it occupied the pulpit, with that look and air of Apostolic gravity and tenderness, which made his appearance there so impressive and so welcome; if, when it went about amongst us, doing good in that humble garb, and with that quiet alacrity of mein, befitting a messenger of the cross; if, in each of these bodily conditions, his spirit sometimes impressed us with a hallowing sensation, how much is this influence deepened, as we contemplate it abstracted from its mortal habiliments!

As it floats before my inner vision, I see the clear radiance of heaven-born Purity; I see the placid smile of Peace; I see the most rare expression of Humility mingled with Self-respect; I see the serious look of Godly fear; I see the august figure of Truth; I see the likeness of angelic Love — I see all these moral features blended gracefully together, and all quickened and glowing with intense yet chastened Activity — yes, Life; spiritual life; earnest, unfaltering, God-serving life; dutiful, beneficent activity, — this is the quality that pervades and animate and distinguishes the whole.*

*The following extract from a note written to me by Mrs. Ware, will confirm the truth of what I have said in regard to the activity of Mr. Ware's spirit.

"The point which was most frequently presented to my thoughts in the daily routine of life, was the essential *activity* of his mind in regard to useful action. I think if he had had physical strength, he would have been *incessantly* employed in this way: and it was this, in a great measure, which made the ministry his early and chosen occupation."

When the same near friend, on hearing him say that he was willing and desirous to be gone, and that he felt his work was done, suggested that there might be some lesson yet to be learned, some discipline for him, he answered, "Yes, the hardest of all *inaction*.

Such are the most striking spiritual lineaments, which, shining before the soul's eye, as in the mild light of heaven, are grouped together into the sainted likeness of him whose mortal countenance we shall see no more. No more, did I say? No more with the bodily vision. But the mind looks upon it now. Its portrait hangs in the heart. Every feature is true to the life. Every line and expression is perfect. We love to gaze upon it to-day; and we shall not lose it to-morrow. It will fade, only to be revived again. It will meet us in our walks. It will smile upon us at our firesides. It will brighten before us in our closets. It will appear to us in our dreams. It will not be veiled from us in our sorrows, nor be hidden from our joys. In the toils of duty, in the repose of meditation, in the days of our moral triumph, in the nights of our remorse, through all life's vicissitudes, and amidst its last solemn scenes, to many of us, who have known, and studied, and loved it, it will again and again re-appear, and never, but, as when it looked upon us in the years that are gone, to make us purer, and calmer, and happier for the sight.

It is not consistent with the purpose which I have proposed to myself in this discourse, for me to offer you, as might otherwise be appropriate in this stage of my remarks, a minute and elaborate analysis of Mr. Ware's character. It has seemed to me far better to represent it to you through the drapery of his works. My duty has been performed, if I have succeeded in exhibiting his leading aim, his principles, his capabilities, and his influence, by tracing the course of his life, describing his plans and modes of action, and exhibiting the impression he has produced, with the results he has accomplished. Besides, Mr. Ware's character was not a difficult one to

understand. It had some shades, indeed, that all did not see, — shades of rare and delicate beauty, which were clearly perceived only by his most intimate friends. It had variety, too, and richness, reserved stores of genius, and strength, and love, and mirth, which kept alive the interest and curiosity of those who were most often in his society. But notwithstanding all this, so great was its simplicity, that any, who knew him at all, knew his principal characteristics. In his own family, he was in all important particulars, what he was to the world. He was not one thing in one place, and another in another, but always the same. Though sometimes reserved, he never dissimulated. If he ever wore a veil, it was of nature, and not of guile. No man living was more truthful, or more in earnest in all that he said and did. His heart was too sound in virtue, to desire any false coloring on the surface; his soul was too ingenuous and noble to endure it, even if it had been needed. His conversation, his preaching, and his writings were, to a remarkable degree, the transcript of his own mind and heart; and because that mind was sound, and wise, and pure, and that heart warm, devout, and true, therefore it came to pass, that in all these modes of influence, he exerted an unusual and uniform power upon the opinions, sentiments, and principles, of men. He was not a great logician, nor pretended to be; but when he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come, with the earnestness of deep conviction, with the logic of common sense, with the authoritative arguments of truth and love, the reason assented, the conscience trembled, the heart submitted. He was not a profound theologian, nor pretended to be; but his mind was well furnished with the

most valuable treasures of sacred lore, and held at its command a magazine of illustrations, expositions, and proofs of all the great doctrines which he had examined, and believed, and therefore preached. He was not a graceful rhetorician, if judged by artificial rules, nor pretended to be; but in that plain, serious, earnest eloquence, which is most appropriate to the pulpit, whether we estimate him by the interest his preaching always attracted, or by the effects it often produced, he has left behind him no superior, and not many equals. He was not a scholar, in the ordinary acceptation of that word; nor a man of brilliant talents, nor pretended to be; but in amount and variety of general and useful knowledge, in quickness of intellectual perception, in correctness of taste, in the finer qualities of a poetic imagination, and in fervor and fertility of genius, he has given abundant evidences of high natural endowments and excellent culture. But better than all, he was a good, a sound, a faithful man. His superiority is not seen in any conspicuous feature of greatness, but in the fulness and proportion and solidity of his moral manliness. He was a hero of the Christian stamp; brave in the cause of virtue, without the flourish of arms; invincible in integrity, without boasting or arrogance; prompt in enterprises of benevolence, without impetuosity; patient in hardships, without the thirst of glory; overcoming evil with good, and achieving the victory over the world, with the sword of the Spirit, under the breast-plate of faith and love. "The same shall be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven."

Such is the character that is before me now; such the spirit that has passed into the Heavens. But it is not, it shall not be, parted from us. Its memorials are all

around us. Its thoughts are working still. Its influence abides on earth. Its projects of benevolence are going on. Its quickening and soothing words are part and parcel of the living. Its prayers for us are yet to be answered. Its best blessings await their fulfilment. The path, into which it has led us, and in which it has walked before us, still stretches on. The duties, of which it counselled us, are still to be performed.

How near to us all is that spirit at this hour! But to *her*, who has been one with it, how close it comes! How intimate will be its nearness unto the end! That oneness has been her joy and her strength, — what a solace is that nearness now! What a recompense to her has been the service of his earthly rest! What a rest to her now is the assurance of his heavenly reward!

Upon *her*, with her *children*, and *other endeared connexions* of the deceased — whose presence on this occasion gives a melancholy pleasure to us all, and appeals to our deepest sympathies — I feel it would be unbecoming and unnecessary for me to obtrude ordinary expressions of condolence or consolation. I can in some measure appreciate their sense of bereavement, in being deprived of the society and debarred from the service of such a friend; I can in some measure understand the holy joy, which they must now experience from the conviction, that his tried spirit is released from its encumbering clay; and I can also participate in the inexpressible satisfaction, with which they now look back upon his unspotted life, and his endeared connexion with them, and forward to the reunion of immortality. But I should wrong that faithful man, who has taught *us* our best lessons of resignation and hope, and whose own example has been even

to *us* a continual inspiration of love and peace, were I to imply, that his influence had been less beautiful upon his own family than upon ourselves, or that he had left them to seek instruction and comfort at the feet of the meanest of his disciples. I know, my respected friends, that you are this day counting over the untold treasures of consolation, long since laid up for you by your beloved relative, against this hour, when you do prize them as the richest of legacies. I know that you need no hand of the living to lead you to those Heavenly Comforters, with whom you have so often communed in sweetest fellowship with your dead.

To the *friends* of the departed, who regret his absence, but do not mourn, because he has rested from his labors, —whilst it is a delightful recollection that they have shared his society, and been partakers of his affection, — let it be henceforth a delightful anticipation, a purifying hope, that they may yet be welcomed by him into a more glorious world, and feel that they have not forfeited his love.

And to this flock with its shepherd, who feel as if we had lost a Father; to all the churches and pastors whom he carried in his capacious heart, and ceased not to remember in his availing prayers; to the University, in whose service he died; to the Theological School, amidst whose tears he was buried; to the large company of his pupils, in whose hearts he is embalmed; to all the members of the Profession, which he adorned, and to this whole community, which he illuminated with the mild light of a Christian example, and consolidated by a righteous man's blessing, may his death be of the most sacred and hallowing influence. May his virtues be imitated,

whilst his memory endures! May the God whom he worshipped, and the Saviour whom he loved, be glorified by his death, even more than by his life. And may we all, in every place, who are of his own kindred and household of faith, whilst we look round in vain for still another of our Christian Fathers, who has been to us a burning and a shining light, — turn our faces upward, and beholding a new star set in the beautiful constellation of our sainted dead, make haste ourselves, like them, to be wise, and live to turn many unto righteousness.*

* The thought of his friend and brother, Dr. Greenwood, whose death occurred so near to his own, was doubtless much and often in his mind, although I have not learned that he made any particular mention of it. But he evidently had reference to it, and connected the departure of that kindred spirit most beautifully with his own approaching change, when he asked, a few days before he died, to have read to him from the Bible, the XXIII Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd," — which he knew that Dr. Greenwood had desired to have chanted at his own funeral. This was the last passage of Holy Writ to which he was able to listen. With a similar reference, also, he requested one of his children to repeat to him Milman's beautiful hymn, commencing, "Brother, thou hast gone before us." The Psalm was chanted, and the hymn sung, by the choir of the Second Church, on the Sunday appropriated to the commemoration of his death.

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UNITARIANISM

THE DOCTRINE OF

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

By Rev. WILLIAM WARE.

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UNITARIANISM

THE DOCTRINE OF

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

The title to this article has not been assumed for its singularity, but because it expresses an important truth. If his own words, as the professed historian of our Lord, are to be taken in evidence, then was Matthew a Unitarian; then is his Gospel strictly Unitarian; and its doctrine is — there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ. If his own statements, and the whole tenor of his Gospel are to be taken as good authority, then is it equally certain, that he has not taught the doctrine of the Trinity, or that of the deity of Jesus Christ; and therefore, never heard of them from the mouth of his divine master, nor did ever believe them. These things, it appears to me, may be established by arguments sufficiently conclusive to satisfy the mind of an impartial inquirer.

I shall endeavor to establish my position, first, by some general observations bearing on the subject, then, by an

examination of those passages which have been thought to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, and lastly, by bringing forward all that evidence of a positive nature, in favor of the strict unity of God, which the Gospel presents. In doing this I shall be as brief as the subject will allow.

I. I would remark, in the first place, that as the doctrine of the Trinity is confessedly one not to have been antecedently expected, at which, as an orthodox writer has himself observed, "reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded," it is right to expect, and demand, before receiving it as an article of belief, evidence that shall bear some proportion to its apparent intrinsic incredibility. It is not enough that such a doctrine be darkly hinted at, obscurely implied, doubtfully expressed. If man deals justly by himself, and acts with due reverence toward God and his own reason, he will not feel himself justified in embracing such a truth without the clearest and most ample testimony; like that, for example, on the strength of which he believes in the divine authority of Jesus, in a future life, and a state of retribution. But such testimony, it cannot be pretended that the bible itself, much less the Gospel of Matthew, does any where furnish. There is nothing distinct, clear, definite on the subject. Not a single verse in the whole bible lays down the doctrine in terms. It is a thing of remote, dark, uncertain *inference*.

It is here worthy to be remarked, that in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and many other supposed doctrines of revelation, the common principles of evidence have been totally reversed. For, while on other subjects, it is a universal principle for the conduct of the understanding, that in proportion to the

apparent intrinsic incredibility and improbability of a fact or proposition, must be the force, clearness, and abundance of the evidence which is brought to establish it — in religion, men have eagerly received, and implicitly believed doctrines, against which there was a strong previous presumption that they could not be true — doctrines of the most momentous import if true, have been admitted, on a show of evidence the least that can be supposed possible in a case of the kind, and which in other matters would be rejected as wholly inadequate, or as warranting only the lowest degree of assent. That which is seemingly impossible, and on the face of the thing incredible or highly improbable, we reasonably require to be substantiated by a proportional fulness and distinctness of testimony. While that which is in accordance with other known facts, and other received knowledge, is in itself highly probable and likely to be true, we admit on a lesser weight of evidence. These just and obvious principles have, I repeat, in religious things been abandoned, if not reversed. Evidence which in a court of human justice, neither judge, nor lawyer, nor jury would take as competent testimony to a fact of even ordinary occurrence and character, or to a point of law — only change the ground to that of controversial divinity, and it becomes with these same persons most ample and decisive, to establish doctrines in themselves the most extraordinary, and most unlikely to be true. In religion, men have been ever ready to believe any thing and every thing, with or without evidence, as the case might be. It has seemed as if they took a strange delight in doing violence to the dictates of reason and common sense, and imagined

themselves devout and meritorious before Heaven, in proportion to the easy credulity with which the most monstrous and revolting dogmas were engrafted into their creed. There has been nothing so essentially absurd, so obviously fabricated and false, that multitudes have not in every age of the church been found to believe it as a part of the revelation of God, at the mandate of a priest, a pope, or a council. Evidence has not been asked for. It has rather been despised. Has it the authority of orthodox fathers? Does it revolt reason and sense? Does it task faith to the uttermost? These have virtually been the preliminary inquiries. Hence, it has happened that doctrines of a purely pagan or human origin, have been handed down from age to age, from church to church, and are unhesitatingly received at the present time throughout all christendom as vital truths of the Gospel, without even a decent show of evidence in their behalf, and so far, indeed, as scripture is concerned, without being so much as named in it. Of this description, I apprehend, is the doctrine of the Trinity. Though so deep and high a mystery, so difficult to comprehend, so impossible to explain and teach, so little to have been looked for in a revelation, and therefore so natural and necessary to have been distinctly stated, and often repeated — this doctrine has St. Matthew, as it seems to me wholly overlooked, and, as I hope will appear in the sequel, closed his Gospel not only without furnishing that proof which the mind ought to demand in the case, but without so much as naming it; nay, without having by chance written but one* sentence which, when the doctrine has been otherwise established, can be tortured so as to favor it. Now I put it to the conscience of every

* Mat. xxviii. 19.

reflecting person, if it be credible that the evangelist could have left such a doctrine in such uncertainty, — in *any* uncertainty. It is credible, that in writing an account of a religion containing a doctrine like that of the Trinity — one which every dictate of reason assured him would meet with the bitterest opposition, would be received by the intelligent only on the amplest evidence, and which he felt at the same time to be the crowning doctrine of the new faith — is it credible, that he should have left it to be doubtfully gathered from a few dark and equivocal expressions, which will bear, and on every just principle of criticism require, an interpretation fatal to the truth he intended to teach?

II. I remark in the next place, that in taking the evidence of Matthew to the doctrine of the Trinity, we are to remember that he was once a Jew, and would have written with the feelings of one who had been so, and therefore if he had believed the doctrine himself, he would have given it a prominent place in his Gospel.

As a Jew, the most cherished article of his faith had been the strict unity of God. It was the distinctive feature of his ancient belief. It was that which gave to it its superiority to the surrounding polytheism. The heathen had as imposing ceremonies, as splendid temples as the Jews; but they did not know and worship the ONE God. This was the exclusive glory of Judaism. This tenet was guarded with most especial jealousy. Idolatry, the having and worshipping more gods than one, was with the Jews the unpardonable sin. The devoted attachment of the Jews to the unity of God stands out more prominently than any other feature in the character of that people. And yet, notwithstanding the plain language of

the Old Testament on this subject, men can be found, theologians, too, to maintain that the Trinity was a doctrine of the Jewish church! Of this I will only say, that the man who, after reading or studying the Old Testament could rise from his labor with a conviction that the Trinity is taught or implied in it, is to be as much regarded as he who should affirm, after a similar inquiry, that Judaism is a system of atheism. The Jew of the present day, as did the Jew of former days, believes God to be one, without division or distinction in name or nature, and now as ever, regards that as the most vital blow aimed at his faith, which invades the purity and integrity of this primary article of his creed; and so far, is he more of a Christian than the believer in the Trinity.

With these feelings, and with such a belief, did Matthew join himself to our Lord. From him, says orthodoxy, as the first and most important lesson, did he receive an account of the mystery of the Trinity. Through his public preaching and private instruction, he must have heard this amazing doctrine often explained and enforced. He must have heard it laid down as the corner-stone of the new religion; for if it made a part of it at all, Trinitarians are right in saying that it formed and still forms its most distinguishing feature. He must have regarded it in that light himself. Its novelty and awful nature, its direct opposition to that great truth which he had been accustomed to venerate, the divine unity, must have deeply impressed his mind. When sent forth by our Saviour as a preacher of the Gospel, it must very often have formed the subject of his discourse, especially as he was addressing *Jews*, who would need to have it distinctly stated and argued, since at first sight it would

seem to them but an ingenious, covert system of polytheism. After our Lord's resurrection, when he became one of the great heralds of the new faith, he must have continued to preach and enforce it to the day of his death. He is commonly supposed to have written his Gospel in the year 65. He had of course preached the religion which he afterward recorded, for the space of more than thirty years after his master's death. During this long interval must he not have become perfectly familiar with the leading truths of the faith he had been disseminating? Must not the vital and essential truths of that faith have been ten thousand times iterated from the house-top and the way-side? Would not, I may confidently ask, these vital and essential truths be the first to present themselves to his mind when sitting down to write an account of the religion which he had so long preached? Would he not, on principles of human nature, have given them the same prominence as a Trinitarian now would, who should sit down to write an account of Christianity? And what truths would a Trinitarian select, and what prominence would he give them? Would they not be the most holy Trinity, the incarnation, the atonement, the double-nature of Christ, the deity of the spirit? And would they not stand out in bold relief on every page, and be proclaimed as the truths, without faith in which there could be no salvation? If the Trinitarian would have written thus, had he been Matthew — who can doubt he would have done so — Matthew, with *his* faith would, it is morally certain, have done the same thing; he could not have written otherwise; he *must have written as he believed.* But, he has given these dogmas no such prominence. Their names do not catch

the eye as it passes over his pages; their sound does not fall upon the ear as those pages are read. Where, I ask, and call for an answer, where are the marks of Matthew's Trinitarian faith? Open his Gospel, and search chapter after chapter, scan every verse and word, and where do you find the slightest trace of his belief in such a tenet? You will say, perhaps, it is *implied* in the form of baptism. Allowing it to be *there;* where else? No WHERE. You will indeed, cull out two or three verses besides, in which you will maintain that divine attributes are ascribed to Jesus, and that therefore he must be God; and therefore there is a Trinity. But — not to find fault with the remarkably excursive nature of this logic — beside these, where else in the whole Gospel do you find indications of the evangelist's faith in the Supreme deity of Jesus, or the doctrine of the Trinity? I will not taunt with the question, where does he mention the name of this essential dogma — where does he speak of the *thing* for which the name stands? Is it not but too plain that, although a few texts may be construed so as to *bear* a trinitarian sense — is it not plain that their value, whatever it may be thought to be, is wholly destroyed when we consider the *general tenor and prevailing language* of the Gospel; that with every reason why the evangelist should give the doctrine in question a distinct prominence above all other truths, he has on the contrary kept it strangely out of sight. A few texts like those on which the advocate of the Trinity relies, ought not to be considered as of any authority by an unprejudiced mind, on a question like this. They are, in truth, of no force whatever. Such a doctrine must be able to show a better support, or it can, with the intelligent mind, never be

thought worthy to be believed. I should think myself as well warranted in saying that the author of a treatise on the Newtonian system was nevertheless a disciple of Des Cartes, because there were one or two statements which I could explain in consistency with his theory, though opposed by the whole scope and tenor of the book, as that the doctrine of the Trinity is to be found in the Gospel of Matthew, and was believed by him, — while the whole tenor and prevailing language of the history rejects, and denies, and disowns it, — because there are a few passages which will *bear* a Trinitarian exposition.

Is it credible, now I would ask, that Matthew, once a Jew and a firm believer in the Unity of God, should have sat down and written a history of his new faith, so opposite on so essential a point to his old belief, without once giving his reader to understand, by a single clear statement, that his new faith was different from his old one? Is it credible, that being a Christian, with a Christian's faith in the tri-personality of the Deity, he should have written on the subject like a Jew? Is it credible, that the Apostle, writing under such circumstances, should have left it a doubtful point whether on the subject of the mode of God's existence, and the person of Jesus Christ, he was not still a Jew? Is it credible, that he should write an express history of Jesus and his religion, and never, in one clear, unambiguous sentence, tell the amazing truth, that Jesus, who to all outward appearance was a man, was not so in reality, but the Almighty and Omnipresent God?

III. I remark in the next place, that we may reason from the general tenor and prevailing language of Matthew's Gospel, to his ignorance of the doctrine of the Trinity. If

true it would have entered deeply into the structure and sentiment of his Gospel.

It is obvious enough what is meant by the general tenor of a book. For example, throughout the bible God is spoken of and described as a *Spirit*. His spirituality is taught or implied every where. If two, or three, or more expressions should *seem* to contradict this truth, it is certain that the contradiction can only be an apparent one; and though we might not be able satisfactorily to interpret them in consistency with that truth, we still should not be justified in bending to *them* the current language of the bible. In many places in scripture, hands and arms, eyes and ears, and a bodily form are ascribed to the Deity; yet we may not therefore believe that the Deity is clothed with flesh and blood like ourselves, but we refer to the general tenor and prevailing doctrine of the bible, and explain these expressions so as to harmonise with it. Similar illustrations might be abundantly multiplied. But I will only add generally, in this connection, that were the doctrines of orthodoxy rigorously tried by this rule, (and there cannot be a juster one) they could not stand the test. Who will not say, that the general doctrine of the bible is, that man is able to do well or ill as he pleases? On this, are grounded the promises and threatenings of religion, which run through the whole bible, and stand forth on every page. But what then becomes of the doctrine of total depravity, which rests for its support on a few insulated texts? What is more evidently the current language, and universal sense of the bible than this, that the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him? But what then be-

comes of the doctrine of the Atonement? Orthodoxy rests on detached sentences, insulated texts, strong figures, and remote inferences and analogies. The current sense of scripture, the spirit of its teachings, the broad and obvious meaning of its most plain and intelligible parts are all fatal to it. The general tenor and prevailing language of Matthew's Gospel show that he had no faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Deity of Jesus Christ. No one can be found to deny, whether orthodox or not, that the Unity of God, and the dependence of Jesus on him, are the doctrines that enter most deeply into the very texture of the Gospel. I am ready to affirm, and with little fear of contradiction by any intelligent believer in the doctrines I oppose, that the *general tenor* of Matthew's Gospel is so decidedly hostile to those doctrines, that the individual cannot be found of a mind unprepossessed in relation to them, or ignorant of them, who, after a diligent perusal and study of that Gospel, would even surmise their truth. Having learned the doctrines from other sources, from catechisms and confessions of faith, then indeed, texts may be found which will *bear* a meaning consistent with their truth, but not one to *require* it; still less, one that directly teaches them. The Catholic gathers a strong argument for the doctrine of the Real Presence, from this Gospel, far stronger than the Trinitarian gathers for the doctrine of the Trinity, from the whole bible; for he finds it laid down in express terms, "Take, eat, this is my body." And why does not the Trinitarian Protestant receive this mystery? Not because it cannot boast the most express declarations of scripture in its favor — all the evangelists unite in teaching it in definite, intelligible language

— but because, among other reasons, it is contrary to the general tenor of the Gospels ; it is not in keeping, not of a piece, with the rest ; and therefore he understands the evangelists in such places to use figurative expressions, which he interprets so as to harmonise with the other plainer and undoubted doctrines of religion. Now, the same principle of proceeding should lead him to interpret the few texts in this Gospel which will bear a Trinitarian sense, in consistency with the tenet of the absolute Unity of God which every where pervades the book. The text containing the form of baptism, is quite as insulated, and solitary in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, as that which seems to teach the mystery of Transubstantiation is in relation to that doctrine ; and yet, here the Trinitarian abandons his adopted principles of criticism which had so kindly saved him from the dreaded faith of the Catholic Church, and most perversely, I am almost ready to say, contends, under circumstances as nearly similar as possible, that the whole Gospel, though diametrically opposed to it, shall bend to the meaning of one verse which is supposed to teach the doctrine of the Trinity.

IV. If the doctrine of the Trinity is one which Jesus taught, and Matthew learned, then is the evangelist's fidelity as an historian brought into question ; for he has not taught it with the clearness and frequency that became so important a doctrine, and were necessary to its universal reception.

One of two things must be true, either our Lord did not, for some reason, teach the doctrine during his ministry, or Matthew has been culpably negligent in recording it — or rather, has altogether omitted to record it.

That our Saviour did not teach the *whole* of his religion to his immediate disciples, there is no good ground for believing. The *fact* that it was to be imparted to the Gentiles, was not indeed fully understood and admitted until after Peter's vision. But there is not a single *doctrine* to be found advanced by any of the apostles, which is not contained in the recorded discourses of our Saviour himself. That he withheld the mysteries of the Trinity and Atonement, as some of the ancient fathers maintained, reserving them for later communications through John, is mere assumption, and a most unfortunate one too; as of all the writers of the New Testament, John is the most distinct and emphatic in his testimony to the unity and supremacy of the Father. Not to add, that the advocates of the Trinity, by adopting the idea that John first taught it, lose whatever advantage is to be derived from the testimony of the other books of the New Testament, which were all — with the exception of his own epistles, written before his Gospel.

It remains, therefore, that Matthew must have been fully initiated into the knowledge of the Trinity. If true, it must have been represented to him as of the same indescribable value and importance which it is now supposed to possess. He must have received it, and believed in it, as the distinctive peculiarity of his Master's religion — the vital, fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. How criminally unfaithful has he been, then! He has professed to write a history of our Lord, and to give an account of his religion, yet the most important doctrine of that religion he has suppressed, or has so obscurely alluded to it, that if by any chance *his* Gospel alone had been preserved, the world would have been for ever ignorant of it!

But it is a moral impossibility that he should have been unfaithful or remiss in such a case. Every motive combined to make him faithful. If he was a *man*, he could not in such circumstances be otherwise than scrupulously so. Love of the truth, which he had preached so long, and for which he afterwards suffered martyrdom; attachment to his Master, whom he had followed so long; self-respect — all united to ensure fidelity and a complete and perfect record. For all he knew or could know, his might be the only history that would ever be written by an ear and eye witness; and how could he be otherwise than most anxiously and minutely careful that every truth of his Master should be recorded, and in a manner corresponding to its relative importance? But the doctrine is not contained or taught in his Gospel; or at most, it is so obscurely implied, that it will not be pretended that except testimony could be drawn from other quarters, it would be possible to establish it on the hints afforded by this evangelist, or even to guess at the existence of such a dogma. Therefore, we conclude that Jesus never taught the doctrine to Matthew, that the evangelist never heard of it, and never intended to record it.

I have now presented some general considerations, tending to show that if Matthew really believed the doctrine of the Trinity, it would have occupied a far more prominent place in his Gospel than has been given it; that it would have stood forth in strong, clear statements, as the one great and distinguishing tenet of the religion of his Master. This has not been done. And there arises, therefore, a strong presumption that the doctrine is not a doctrine of his Gospel; and that such passages as have been thought by some to teach or imply it, are misunderstood.

It was my second object to show, that even the few passages which are thought by Trinitarians to relate to this subject, have in fact, no relation to it whatever, and are misinterpreted when they are adduced as evidence to the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Deity of Jesus Christ.

The first which occurs, is the text, "Thou shalt call his name Immanuel," &c.

The next is in Matt. ix. 2. "He saith to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee." Hence, Trinitarians infer that Jesus was God; for none can forgive sin but he. To this it is enough to reply, that the authority to forgive sins was as easy and natural a power to be conferred on the Saviour as any other, and proves him to be God no more than does every other exercise of miraculous power. Besides, the apostles had power to forgive sins. To them our Lord said, "whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Were the apostles, each, God?

Matt. xi 27. "All things are delivered unto me by my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." If the knowledge which Jesus is here said to have of God, implies Omniscience and Deity on his part, the implication is extended, let it be observed, to *those to whom the Son shall reveal him* — Supreme Deity is ascribed as much to them as to Jesus; that is, it is not to either.

Besides, the first part of this verse, denies the doctrine it is brought to support. "All things are *given* unto me by my Father." The receiver is not the same

as the one who gives, any more than the sender can be the same as the sent.

Matt. xviii. 20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and chap. xxviii. 20; "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world," are commonly adduced as declaring Christ's Omnipresence, and thence his Supreme Deity. It is not easy to reply seriously to argument like this. These passages have not the most distant relation to the subject. Our Lord, in these verses, merely expresses according to a universal license — a beautiful and universal form of language — his interest and affection for his disciples; for the presence of which he speaks, whatever it be, is confined to them. How often do we say to our absent friends, "Though away from you, consider us as present," — "Our hearts are with you," — "In spirit we are among you?" Paul says to the Corinthians, writing from Ephesus, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit," &c. Had Paul the attribute of Omnipresence? Was Paul God?

Chap. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Since the text of the three heavenly witnesses has been abandoned by the intelligent and honest of all parties, as indisputably a forgery, this is the strong-hold of the doctrine of the Trinity; for, unless I greatly err, it is the only instance save the form of benediction in the epistles, in which the supposed persons of the Trinity are mentioned together. And how can that doctrine claim our faith or our respect, which is so supported? Is it to be believed, that so tremendous a mystery would have been left at such loose ends by the sacred writers, had they beliveed

it? But, in regard to the text before us, how, you ask, does it teach the doctrine of the Trinity? That doctrine teaches, that three Divine and Infinite Beings or Gods, are yet but one; that one God is three. These points, it is most manifest, are not proved by the text. Nothing is said of the equality of the persons named; it is not said that the Holy Ghost is a person; it is not said that they are one and yet three, or three and yet one; all of which ought to be said to warrant the use that orthodoxy makes of it. But if these things are so, in what way is the doctrine of the Trinity derived from it even by inference? Thus. It is said in the first place, that because these three persons (allowing them all to be persons) are *named together*, they must be equal; and therefore, each God. But this will hardly do; for, in Exod. xiv. 31, it is written, "And the people believed the Lord, and his servant Moses." — Is Moses God? * "And all the people feared the Lord, and Samuel." — Is Samuel thus proved to be equal to God? † "And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king." — Are they equal because named together, and, in the Scripture use of the word, worshipped together? Paul says to Timothy, ‡ "I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that ye observe these things." — Are the angels Gods? Just as mistaken and childish as these inferences would be, is that which Trinitarians make from the verse in question, of the equality of the three persons named in it.

But once more, the Deity of Jesus and the doctrine of a Trinity is inferred from this passage, because it is

* 1 Sam. xii. 18. † 1 Chron. xxix. 20. ‡ 1 Tim. v. 24.

thought that *Baptism* must necessarily be into the name of God, or of a Divine Being equal to him. But not so; for Paul speaks of the Israelites being "baptised into Moses," who certainly was not God, or his equal, though he was *called* a God to Pharaoh. The same apostle, writing to the Corinthians, says — "Is Christ divided, was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptised into the name of Paul? I thank God I baptised none of you, save Crispus and Gaius, lest any one should say I baptised into my own name." Some, therefore, imagined that Paul might abuse his power, and baptise into his own name. But did they believe Paul to be God? It is, therefore, no evidence that the persons named in the text are divine, because baptism is administered in their names.

The true and whole meaning of the verse, is, "go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptising the converts into the belief of that religion which was the gift of God, through his Son Jesus Christ, and which was confirmed by the Holy Spirit, or miraculous powers bestowed on the apostles, on the day of Pentecost." Let it be remembered, in this connection, that no weight was attached to this form by the apostles, though so much is now-a-days; for they never used it, always baptising into the name of Jesus alone. But if they had thought that so solemn and essential a doctrine as the Trinity was contained in those words of the Saviour, they would scarce have felt authorized to depart from them.

Such is the testimony of Matthew to the doctrine of the Trinity.

And is it credible, that *such* a doctrine should be left to rest on *such* support? Is it to be believed that an inspired apostle should have written what he doubtless

regarded a full account of all the essential peculiarities of the religion of Jesus, and have passed over in such silence, its most remarkable one? Nay, as will be seen, should have recorded sayings of our Lord, utterly contradictory of it, which wholly refute and deny it? Which must be expunged from the Gospel, before it can be admitted to be true?

Let me now as was proposed in the third place, bring forward the direct and indirect evidence of St. Matthew to the unity of God, and the derived power of Jesus Christ.

I shall not pretend to adduce the whole body of proof of this description, since it would be to transcribe the greater part of the Gospel.

Every instance in which the singular pronouns are used in connexion with the name of God, is a proof of his Unity. This universal usage throughout the bible is a demonstration of it. Every instance in which Jesus is spoken of as a man, with human feeling and affection, acting, speaking, suffering, and at last dying as a man, is an argument in behalf of his derived nature. Every prayer which he offered up to God, every reference to him as *his* God as well as ours, is a complete demonstration of the supremacy of the Father, and the dependence of Jesus; unless we are willing to believe that our Saviour went through the mockery of praying to himself; that one person of the sacred three was obliged to solicit favor and assistance from the others, which he was as able

* With respect to Mat. xxviii. 9, it is enough to refer to xvii. 26, Acts x. 25; 1 Chron. xxix. 20,; and of xxii. 41, &c., to say, that the difficulty with the Jews, in answering our Lord's question, arose wholly and obviously from their having no conception of the *spiritual* nature of Christ's kingdom.

to procure himself, as they to bestow, and which, indeed, an Infinite Being could not need.

Jesus says, chap. iv. 10. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Therefore God is but one; for if Jesus had been God, he must have also been an object of worship as such, — xix. 17. Our Saviour says to the young man. "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." Whatever he meant by the term good, our Lord says there is no second being to whom it can be applied in the same sense in which it is applicable to God. Therefore our Saviour did not regard himself as God. It is an explicit denial that he was so. He absolutely refuses a title which he conceived could be used with propriety only in relation to the Supreme God. This marked and instantaneous rejection of a title so modest and humble, shows, I think, a determination to repress, in the beginning, every disposition to bestow upon him extravagant honors, and which the wonderful powers he possessed would be so likely to draw from them. The *sensitiveness*, as it may without impropriety be termed, which our Lord discovers on this occasion, is worth a chapter of direct assertions, in proof of his derived and inferior nature.

I quote but one more text of this class. Chap. xxiv. 36. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, [in Mark, it is added, 'neither the Son'] but my Father only." In these words our Saviour plainly and distinctly replies to an earnest and anxious question of his disciples, (verse 3, asking, "when these things shall be,") that "he does not know." The reference of our Lord is to the destruction of Jerusalem. When that was to happen, he says in so many words, he does not know, nor any other being beside the Father

Omniscient. By this declaration he disclaims all participation of the Divine nature and mind. He declares that his knowledge is partial and limited. It is a denial, from his own mouth, of his supreme deity, or his equality with God.

I will waste but few words on the mode of reasoning, or trick, I should rather say, by which the true sense of this text and similar ones, is evaded. "Our Saviour did *not know the day, as man*, though as *God* he did." This is the Trinitarian argument. It is enough to reply to this, that it involves the blessed Saviour in the grossest prevarication, and therefore it cannot be maintained. The moral character of Jesus is sacrificed. For, the infinite, divine mind in Jesus, must have *embraced* and *included* the human; so that the human nature could not, by any possibility, know or be ignorant of any thing, but what the divine nature must have participated in it. Therefore, for the *Son* (including both natures,) to say that he was ignorant of the day of Jerusalem's fall, or of any thing else, indeed, was a plain falsehood.

But our objection to this mode of reasoning on the part of Trinitarians, rests upon a broader ground than this. *We say that it entirely sets aside the authority of Jesus, and provides a way of escape from all that he uttered, whether relating to doctrine or morals.* For if the devout and sincere Trinitarian is at liberty to explain away and reject the explicit statements of his Master, which do not harmonize with an adopted theory, on the ground that he spake them as a man, and therefore they are not binding; the undevout man of the world may resist and shake off the morality of the Gospel, and the great sanction of future punishment, on the ground that, in his opinion, it was all uttered as man, and therefore is without authority. And

we are all at liberty to select such doctrines and such moral precepts as are agreeable to us, and say of the rest, "Oh, it was spoken as *man*, and we have nothing to do with it."

For myself, therefore, I shall always hold that, as unanswered and unanswerable, the force of which can only be evaded by a resort to that wretched subterfuge, that unauthorized and unscriptural dogma, the double nature of Christ; fatal alike to the moral character of the Saviour, and to the whole authority of his religion.

Before concluding, I will refer to a few passages which are wholly inexplicable on the Trinitarian hypothesis, except on the ground of the two natures of Christ, which is to be considered in the light of a mere evasion of the difficulty, and only to encounter far more formidable ones.

I name first the account given by the evangelist, of the temptation of Christ. This, I maintain, is intelligible only on the supposition that Jesus was actually what he appeared to be. It opens thus: "Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil." "That is," says the Trinitarian, "then was Jesus, i. e. God the Son led up by the Spirit, i. e. God the Holy Ghost, to be tempted — of the Devil." What inextricable confusion, what impossibilities are here! Can God be tempted? And by the Prince of evil? And yet all this can be avoided only by that dangerous resort, which overthrows Christianity itself — the double nature of Christ.

Again. We read in the 26th chapter of this Gospel, of the agony in the garden, during which our Saviour utters this prayer: "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Was the being who put up this petition

in so much agony, the Almighty God? And to whom then was the prayer preferred? And how could it be necessary? Was God subject to weakness and want, to infirmity and fear? And if so, what higher power was there to succor?

Again. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And when he had cried again with a loud voice, he yielded up the ghost.

The questions which arise on this verse, but which I will not state, for they are truly shocking, can be answered only by the aid of the two-fold nature of Christ, and must be always regarded, therefore, as unanswered.

Although the testimony from this Gospel, both direct and indirect, in behalf of the Unity of God, and the derived power of Jesus Christ, is far from exhausted, yet I feel warned to bring these remarks to a close.

In the statements which have been made, many may think that I have been too minute, and have dwelt too long and earnestly on points already sufficiently obvious and plain. This may be so. I hope every one who calls himself a Unitarian, has often revolved the arguments which have now been offered, in his mind, and has long felt their force. But we do not make these statements over and over again so much in the hope of pouring new knowledge into the minds of those who have diligently studied the principles of their faith, and feel, and know the adamantine foundation on which they rest, as with a view of catching the eye of some who may not as yet have given their thoughts to the subject, but who may be willing to attend to it with dispassionate and honest minds; and with more especial reference, also, to those who

nominally embrace our views, but who are but slightly acquainted with the grounds and reasons of them. For it cannot be denied, that there are not a few of those who think themselves and call themselves Unitarians, who are wofully ignorant of the worth and strength of that faith which they profess, and for whom, if they could be persuaded to read and study, scarce any statements or discussions could be too plain and elementary. These have been considered in what has been said, and should always he held distinctly in sight. For these, there should be line upon line, precept upon precept; for if unenlightened, they will be too apt, in times of tribulation, to fall away, and apostatise. It is ignorance, ignorance alone, which Unitarianism has to fear. The intelligent Unitarian cannot fall away. It is incredible, that he who has ever thoroughly and devoutly studied the evidences of Unitarian Christianity, should afterward doubt their validity. Such a one has the same clear and confident perception of their unassailable strength, that the well-grounded Christian has of the evidences of Christianity. We hold it to be an intellectual impossibility, for the well-informed Christian to doubt the conclusiveness of that testimony that has made him such — to be converted to infidelity by a Paine or a Carlile. But nothing less impossible do we deem it, that a Unitarian Christian, supposing him possessed of ordinary strength of mind, to have conscientiously studied the subject, and adopted his views on reflection and conviction, should be converted from his Unitarianism back to Orthodoxy. We may as well believe that a scholar would suddenly renounce any of the great principles in science or philosophy, which by universal consent have become a part of demonstrated truth; that in chemistry, he would

become a convert to the exploded doctrine of Phlogiston; that in philosophy, he would cast away the system of Newton, and return to the whirlpools of Des Cartes; would forswear Bacon and Locke, and retreat to the logic of the schools. But these things cannot be supposed of a *sound* mind, neither can the other.

Let therefore, the leading points of the Unitarian belief be frequently stated, and the arguments which establish them be frequently presented in various forms, and in different aspects, and in new relations, that if it be possible, minds of every character may find something suited to their peculiar wants and habits of thinking. If Unitarians will only *read*, and look into the evidences of their faith, they will never waver. Let them once be Unitarians from conviction and reflection, and it will be impossible that they should ever be any thing else. If, unhappily, they have trusted to the prejudices of education for safety, or to a second-hand faith, they may not be able to stand in the evil hour, nor should their fall surprise themselves or others. The essence of Unitarianism is self-inquiry, self-conviction. Then, it is quietness and assurance for ever.

It is hoped that the examination that has now been made of the evidence of Matthew touching the doctrines of the Trinity, and the Unity of God, may be of service in strengthening the faith of some of those who are still inquiring for the right way. To the Unitarian who would desire to add fresh strength to his faith, it is recommended as the most effectual method of confirming him in all good doctrine, to read over any one, or all of the Gospels, with a particular view to the evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity — let him mark the passages — without referring to commentators — which appear to *him* distinctly

to teach or imply that doctrine — and I am willing to predict that he will never again be tempted to doubt, if he had ever done so before, the solidity of that foundation on which his faith rests. Let the Trinitarian, who has made up his mind to be honest and fair, and unprejudiced in the work, go through a similar process, and I have not the least doubt that he would cast away his old belief as a baseless, unsubstantial dream. For he would say, "whence should I derive my faith, if not from the discourses of Jesus himself, and from the professed historians of his life and doctrine; but from these sources I can gather no evidence that bears any proper proportion to the importance of the doctrine to be proved; the doctrine must have had its origin elsewhere."

My conclusion from the whole of what has gone before, is — if Matthew has failed to record the doctrines of the Trinity and of the supreme deity of Jesus Christ, he did not believe them — did not know of them, as doctrines of the Christian religion; and therefore they are *not* doctrines of Christianity. He *has* wholly failed to record them. He has not *directly taught* them, and the whole tenor and prevailing language of his Gospel rejects them as false. In connection with this, let it be remembered, that Matthew's is to be regarded as a distinct and independent account of Christianity, containing what he must have deemed a complete representation of it; and the conclusion is irresistible, that he never heard of the dogmas in question, and never intended to teach them.

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THE

SIGNIFICATION AND VALUE

OF

"A GOOD LIFE."

By Rev. F. D. HUNTINGTON.

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It is certainly very natural that any thoughtful mind should put the question, What is essential to acceptance with the perfect Father? What is the demand laid upon us by Religion, and by the Author of our religious nature? What shall we do that we may be saved? Such a question takes us at once into the very heart of Christianity. Christ came with a message, of which a chief word was "Salvation." Has man himself anything to do respecting that salvation? and, if so, what has he to do? Most of the theological discussion that has gone on in the world has been intended to bear more or less directly on these inquiries. And yet it is worthy of notice that this discussion has concerned itself rather with determining what has been done *for* man, than what he is forever bound to do for himself, both by the laws of his being and the bidding of his Maker. It has been well nigh forgotten that aid from without comes to the individual soul

only in exact proportion to the earnestness of the free choice, and the energy of the resolute exertion, by which that soul resolves and toils to rescue, develope, and perfect itself.

A very considerable portion of the Christian world, Christian at least in claim and by profession, are daily met with the grave charge that their belief inculcates "a good life," and nothing more. This is accounted the darkest feature in their perilous creed, or their more perilous destitution of a creed. They preach, it is said, as their gospel, the necessity and the sufficiency of "a good life." The charge, though long usage has fairly entitled it to be laid away among antiquities, is not yet worn out. The lips of the living are repeating it to-day. It is published perpetually, — a fiery sentence of excommunication.

Is the doctrine of a good life, then, we are asked, equal to the reformation and evangelization of mankind? Granting the indispensableness of "works," may there not be a "faith" separate from them, a faith that does not even appear by them, something impalpable, indefinite, almost indescribable, eminently qualifying us for the favor of Heaven? With a reference to the present aspects of the subject, therefore, let us pass to its examination. Let it be observed, however, in advance, that we do not overlook, or remove to a secondary place, the divine mercy. That is a theme by itself, great and sacred. Revelation tells us, in tones of heavenly tenderness, of Forgiveness and Compassion. Till the human spirit has felt and welcomed these, it has not received the richest and noblest blessing. Yet it will hardly be denied that these are bestowed under certain conditions recognizable

on the part of the receiver, and it is with those that we are now concerned.

We begin with concession, if indeed it need be called concession. We grant that any view of human responsibility which is confined to the present life merely, though it may claim to be religious, is yet insufficient to any high religious purpose or consequence. We grant, nay, we maintain, and will be chief in maintaining, that any system which only regulates and instructs those relations that men sustain to one another, is plainly weak and false — considered, that is, as a system of religion: it is a contradiction against its own name and an illusion to the mind. But we deny, as it is almost superfluous to do, that either of the gross mistakes here alluded to has been committed, in any measure or any moment, in word or deed, in teaching or belief, by those who make a righteous life the main essential in the Christian. We grant, also, that, in the wide prevalence of a creed that puts aside the duties men owe mutually, good-will, brotherly affection, justice, with moral integrity before God, as things commonplace, apart from evangelical piety, well enough to be inculcated at chance-seasons and in lecture-rooms, — in the prevalence, too, of the frequent neglect of these duties which is a direct consequence of this their light estimation, but should be a shame to every right-minded man, — voices eloquent and mighty have been lifted up to plead in their behalf, to restore them to their places of honor, to demand for them the world's homage, to defend the divine right of conscience, to rebuke the base tongue of hypocrisy, to silence the cant of empty enthusiasm and the boasts of noisy bigotry; and all this even to the temporary and comparative dismission of matters pertaining to

the inward experiences and warmer sentiments of the spirit.

And here our concessions are closed. We acknowledge in the advocates of the excellent life no inadequateness of idea, no misconception of the nature of the Christian obligation, no standard lower than that they take from Jesus, the Master. If they are compelled to turn aside from the path that would have led them sooner on to the positive assertion and application of their faith's full power, in order to expose a threatening and usurping error, it may be onesidedness, but it is not falsity. And it has been a characteristic of every reform in Christian history, since the Great Teacher's departure. To resist and beat down some overgrown abuse, each noble vindicator of the majesty and simplicity of right has been driven to deviate from the straight and single line of a universal and perfect progress. He must restore its venerable sanctity to some slighted virtue. He must clothe again in its native freshness, strength and beauty, some truth whose loveliness has been marred, whose authority has been disowned, whose divine likeness has been scorned and trampled in the dust.

Yet there remains possibly in some minds a sincere and honest doubt. There is an anxious uncertainty whether the doctrine of a Good Life does embrace the great message of instruction — to say nothing here of its offers and its promises — that the Gospel utters to humanity. May not the origin of this perplexity be found in a mistaken, or rather in an imperfect and partial apprehension, of one of the terms thus used? Do we perceive the vast, the comprehensive meaning of the word "Life?" Were that intimately and thoroughly understood, in its

broadest and loftiest acceptation, could there remain a doubt lest it should not cover the entire field of religious culture and religious achievement? Give it its full significance, and you will need no sublimer name to describe the immortal destiny of your spirit.

"A good life! a good life!" some vague and mystical pietist exclaims, "it is not enough. Let your life be as it may, we must have more. Religion requires more." And when he is asked *what* more Religion requires, he will reply, "Faith, devout affections, burning emotions." But does he suppose Life, the true Life, the Spirit's only Life, does not require all these also, and the intensest energy of their exercise? that he can produce "a good life" without them? What kind of a life should that be that is unsupported by a divine trust, confidence, faith? that is never kindled and ardent with dear hopes, earnest longings, and a holy love? that has not its clinging and its aspiring, — its clinging in affection to the imperishable and the unchangeable, to the spiritual world, to God and to goodness, to Christ and to perfection, — its aspiring in devotion to the unattained and the infinite? that never feels the inspiration of prayer, nor has the clear insight of the soul that meditates and adores? nay, that has not its moments of transfiguration, higher, purer, better than all moments beside, be they even moments of rapture, so it be but a rapture that is deep, reserved, unpretending, in the heart? We have no right to strip the idea of Life of every thing that invests it with dignity, interest, and glorious honor, and still call it by that worthy title. It is not the body's life, not the life nourished through the senses, and dissolving with their decay, whose goodness is to be our perfection and salvation. When we use this word "Life" in its connections with religion, we speak of an

indestructible and a spiritual life, a life inward and real, the life that is more than meat, that consisteth not in the abundance of possessions, to which only the labor of the righteous tendeth, of which mortality is swallowed up, over which death hath no power, — the life that is hid with Christ in God. Spiritual and renewed affections, then, are a constituent element in a "good life," — an ardent and devout love for the Father and his service, for the Son and his truth, for all human souls and their well-being and constant growth in excellence.

This doctrine of a righteous life not only recognizes the distinct being and activity of the spiritual nature in man, of the human spirit's faith and affection, but it involves, as another essential, the distinct idea of God, the infinite Spirit, the absolute Being, the ever-living, ever-creative Father. If it implies faith, boundless faith, so does it and so must it imply the boundless object of that faith. If it supposes affections, so must it acknowledge the Being of Love, in whom their eternal streams centre, where their undying beauty and freshness have their source and home. The idea of God and of his worship, I say, the reverential sentiment that owns a parent and our filial obligation to him, is necessary to a true life. The very constitution in which we are framed declares it. It is bound up among the conditions and laws of our existence. Every thing internal forbids us to forget that omnipresent, all-pervading fact, the fact of God. There can no more be a good life without it, than there can be sunlight without the sun, or warmth in its beam without the great central urn of fire. Is there goodness, there must be God. And before there can be actual goodness, in the right sense of that word, in any individual life, there must be in that soul where the life beats, a

profound acknowledgment, a vital veneration, for the life's Author. There must be the grateful service rendered directly to Him who originates every impulse to virtue.

The just conception of a good life embraces, in the next place, besides warm affections and the inward recognition and worship of God, as a part of that life and no trivial part either, — good works, righteous deeds. This throbbing heart of love, these living sentiments that fasten themselves on things divine and pure, the confidence of piety, must all work outwardly into visible action. The spiritual life does not consist, indeed, of external efforts alone. And so liable are these to a temporary misconstruction, so subject may they be to concealed motives, so easily are they perverted to serve as the instruments of a false and deceptive intention, that they often constitute but an imperfect and inexact test of the character. Yet they enter into the good character as an element; and it is eternally certain that where they are not, there is not goodness, nor regeneration, nor piety. Where there is loud profession and showy zeal without them, there is tolerable reason to suspect either base insincerity or weak delusion. Yes, good works: the time has not come yet when the world can do without them, when it has outgrown them, or can afford to leave them to take care of themselves. They cannot really *be*, without a foundation in the deep soul. There may be works seemingly good, pretending to be good, bearing beautiful names, proclaiming in fond cant their worthiness to be admired; but they are not *good* works, nor have they any thing to do with the character save to endanger and to mislead it. But the deeds that are blameless and noble not only in their seeming, but in their hidden birth-place, their secret

intent, in the temper from which they spring as well as in the outward operation, are of the very essence of religion. Without them religion would not be executing its natural and legitimate office — converting and purifying the soul. It seems sometimes to be thought, because certain works are spoken of by an Apostle as "dead," that some disparagement is thrown upon the common duties, and daily virtues, that are but the continual shining forth of a right disposition. It seems to be not understood, or else forgotten, that the Apostle refers to a wholly different class of actions, namely to those "works of the law" by which, it is said, "no flesh can be justified," nor the animating spirit received: works of the law, ritual, superficial, formal; hollow ceremonies of the Jew, set off heartlessly to clear the conscience as meritorious sacrifices, while there was no self-denial, nor meekness, nor devotion in them, but only pride, pharisaism, and pretension. Against these he was protesting, and he properly called them dead, possessing no life and kindling none. Again, centuries later, when the church had loaded herself with like corruptions once more, bold reformers rebuked them with the fearless courage of apostles, as impositions before Heaven. Luther and his fellows raised their voices and their hands to shake off this self-righteous arrogance and ritualism of Rome, as insolent and haughty as the assumptions of Jerusalem. They exclaimed upon those works as "dead," but they never called them "good." They preached the necessity of faith, but no other faith than that which *works*, and works by love. It is a most injurious imputation that some misunderstanding admirers, in the heat of partisan warfare, have cast upon their memories, that they despised the simple, faithful actions which make a day or a life acceptable to God.

Simple, faithful actions: they are not small things, nor easy things, nor insignificant things. They are significant above all visible things besides. They are clothed, to the Christian's sight, with a solemn and venerable grandeur. To do them rightly is to win victories mightier than the triumphs of emperors, memorable even in the skies. It is to be the master of more than earthly powers. To deny self, to suppress mounting passion, to serve another more zealously than the private interest or pleasure, never to trespass in one's dealings over the delicate borders of honesty, to shun impurity as the worst defilement and meanness of spirit as a degradation, to bind oneself immovably to principle, to despise the hypocrite's mockery, to be genuine and true every way in action, — this is no series of adventitious and indifferent attainments. To work righteousness is no accidental attendant of a good life, that may approach occasionally and go again without harm. It is the very substance of holiness. It is at least a possession and a power that the strength of but one on earth ever completely gained. It is only through the spirit's vigilance, toil and prayer, that our progress towards it can be made sure. To become a laborer in that progress is to become a laborer together with Christ, and with the Father who "worketh hitherto." Pity and warning for the people or the time that thinks to honor God without working righteousness. Labor is an unvarying law to the soul. In labor every emotion that is real must appear. God works, therefore, — we will hold to them still; not as the whole, not as possible without a fountain in the heart to spring from, and a principle in the mind to be stayed by, but yet as indispensable and sublime. Their fragrance fills the earth, and there shall be memorials of them wherever the

Gospel of Life shall be preached. Men may not always notice them, or record them, or applaud them; and so there is danger less they go by default. Showy manifestations of transient feeling are better fitted to flatter the vanity and dazzle the crowd; but their brightness shines only upon earth, and briefly here; while for every unostentatious, generous, holy deed, in the narrowest sphere, of household, closet, workshop or wayside, piously designed with the love of God in the heart, nobly executed as if eternity were present, there shall be an unseen monument and a long remembrance. It shall have its place of dignity in the history of silent struggles that other ages shall reveal. It shall stand in that immortal company by whose noiseless endeavors beneficence, truth and justice hold their way unsubdued in the world. Humanity will confess it as among the impulses that ever urge it on to its appointed destiny of perfection. Good works, then, as well as earnest affections and a spiritual worship, are an element in every true or righteous life.

I have spoken of different estimates placed on the value of a Good Life, and their comparison together, as a subject of peculiar interest at the present moment. There are those who, while speaking of a Good Life, regard a moral deportment as entitling man to acceptance with his Maker. There are those who set a moral deportment aside as worthless and treacherous. I do not believe Christianity would be safe in the hands of either of these defences. Nor do I believe either class to be, for the time, touching the direct point of religion. Nor yet do I believe that the truth lies in any middle way between the two. It has seemed rather that there is not always a full realization of the vast meaning enfolded in that

phrase, "A Good Life." If there were, could so superficial a thing as the mere outward bearing be taken for all it signifies? Or, on the other hand, could a good life be imagined to exist, where there is not an efficient working, an energetic activity, in every position of the soul's experience?

Let no man, therefore, except he has some other gospel than that of Jesus, presume to speak with slighting or scorn of any humble, Christian deed, though it be so unblazoned a matter as plain uprightness in the affairs of business; better have that than, *without it*, special paroxysms of ecstacy, set forms of exhortation, or extraordinary visions. Where there is the deepest and most abiding spiritual effort, shining out naturally, in a conversation of things divine, in the kind and even temper, in respect for the lowly and the suffering, in speaking as confidingly and affectionately of the Father in heaven as of the parent on earth, — as earnestly and simply of the soul's wants and welfare as of dear life itself and its immediate interests, — where, I say, there is the deepest and most abiding spiritual effort, there is the most religion, and the most acceptableness to God.

Again, and yet more positively, let not some unspiritualized disciple of worldliness, some half-believer in the realities of the soul but full believer in the satisfactions of the flesh, some seeker of a vain compromise, so that fortunes shall have the devotion and virtue the praise, this earthly scene an eager service, and the future a put-off happiness never striven for here, — venture to whisper to himself that because men do not censure God must approve. Let him not answer to the stirring messages of revelation sounding in the depths of his nature, that a decent morality is all Christianity enjoins. That is to

confound morality with piety, ethics with theology, the relations sustained to the finite with the loftier relations sustained to the Infinite. It is to strike out the elemental truth of Divinity, of God. It is to deny the reality of aspirations that every heart is conscious of, the unsatisfied yearnings that go out into eternity, and the prayers that strive to bear us upward into a serener atmosphere. It is to leave life uninspired, barren, a cold monotony. Observe how each of those universal precepts that endeavor to make man's call and duty clear to him imply this truth. "He that *feareth God and worketh righteousness* is accepted with Him." "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee" — God requires it — "but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" "*Fear God* and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." "Pure religion and undefiled *before God*, even the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Who that has ever seen or felt the stains that the world so readily blots upon the soul, who that has ever battled with its temptations and tried its terrible armies, will not own from the inmost heart, that to keep unspotted from its touch, there must be a guidance and a preservation higher than is found on earth, purer revelations than from the doubtful oracles of mortality? Pure religion is religion before God, even the Father. It is not morality alone. It is not transport alone. It is nowhere without us. It is righteousness of life, having its springs of light and warmth, affection, trust, peace, and hope, within, ever supplied from Heaven as the heart asks and feels and strives, ever teaching the world by the steadfast influence of its unfaltering aim, and energy, and faith.

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THE

RELATIVE OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIANS

TO THE

HEATHEN.

By Rev. G. E. ELLIS.

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"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." These are recorded as the last words of the founder of the Christian religion. They were received when first uttered, and are now received whenever repeated, as an express command to Christians to evangelize the world — to bring all people under Christian influences. He, the author and finisher of our faith, the light of the world, the expectation of the Gentiles, the desire of all nations, devotedly and triumphantly fulfilled the work which God had given him. He taught and lived and died, an example, a witness, and a sacrifice. Perfect truth went forth from his lips — a reviving doctrine, which, wherever received, will change the face of things and the hearts of men. This doctrine constitutes his religion faultlessly true, infinitely precious, the hope and comfort and guide

of human souls. We are rejoicing in its light. We know not its value. And when his personal work was finished, with that sublime simplicity, that comprehensive and all-embracing love of man every where which characterized his life and doctrine, he uttered those last words.

The words are so simple that they scarce require comment. They were addressed to the eleven chosen disciples, but of course, and with increased rather than diminished authority, the obligation they impose extends to all Christian generations — to all believers. "To teach all nations" means to impart to them the essential truths of the Christian religion — to evangelize them — that is, to give them the Gospel — the *good news*, the glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. "Baptising" means initiating, introducing into, or making acquainted with. This signification the word acquired from the purpose of the rite which it expressed. Plunging into or sprinkling with water, was a rite which had been practised from time immemorial in the ancient world, in connection with religious observances. Ablutions and purifications being a great part of the oriental religions, were frequently of daily repetition, and were of especial significance where one religion was substituted for another. John the Baptist took up the rite which he found in the world, and gave to it a higher meaning, as he made it symbolical of a washing or renewing of the heart by repentance. Jesus Christ submitted to the rite and honored it, that he might comply with all that was of good intent and use. He did not himself perform the rite, but encouraged his disciples to use it always. He connected with the rite, in his last command, the three leading truths of his religion, into a knowledge of which they should initiate their converts —

expressed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They should make known to all nations the paternal character of the Supreme Being — that he was the Father — that he had sent his Son Jesus Christ, to be the medium of communication between earth and heaven, to declare the will and law and mercy of God — and that by his Holy Spirit — his Divine Influence, he doth govern, direct, and sanctify the hearts of his children. These three leading truths of the Christian religion are embraced in the baptismal formula. The apostles, and the Christians who should succeed them, were likewise enjoined by Jesus Christ to teach the nations, to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them — and the Saviour promised to them, and to us all, the comfort and power of his personal presence until the world should end.

It is because that command was listened to that we have received the lessons of that Gospel, enjoying a religion which meets all our wants, which fills our hearts with peace and hope, and makes us merciful and pitiful to the suffering — instead of devising and worshipping idols, wronging one another, living without a law, and dying without a hope. It is because that command was heeded that the fairest regions of this globe are now under Christian influences. And it is because that command can be annulled, only by being fulfilled, that the Christian portion of the world has yet a duty to perform. The command is still on record — and still commands. It offers the Gospel, and says, preach it to all who have it not, wherever they are, at home or abroad. Former Christian generations, the first Christian generations especially, have labored devotedly and triumphantly in this work. There is not a living being under Christian influ-

ences who has not a concern in it. Let us now consider our own: let us weigh the obligation which we owe, as a portion of the Christian world, to those who still know not the Gospel.

A few words of comparison between the circumstances under which this work was commenced, and those which are presented in the present stage of its progress, will prepare us to discern our position and duty. These circumstances make the work of communicating the Gospel to the heathen in some respects more difficult to us, and in some respects more easy, than it was for the apostles to preach it

Not one twentieth portion of this globe was known in the time of the apostles, and that portion was chiefly under as high civilization and culture as any regions ever can be — without a pure religion. A small extent of territory just where Europe, Asia, and Africa bound upon the Mediterranean Sea, *i. e.* the north of Africa, the south of Europe, and the west of Asia, then comprised the known world. This little belt of civilization, extending in from the sea around from one to three hundred miles, was bordered by deserts, mountains, woods, and wildernesses, where barbarous hordes were known to roam, and whence wild beasts were obtained for the amphitheatres. There is no evidence that any one of the apostles ever penetrated into these barbarous regions, or offered the Gospel to their wild inhabitants. Those of the apostles who preached in Judea had the benefit of an existing religion, which, being introductory to Christianity, was a preparation for it, and embraced some of its truths. Those of the apostles who went out of Judea, found the then known world all under one government, the Roman, which showed the majesty

of its imperial grandeur in its roads which led to all capitals, and in its institutions and laws, which were introduced into all provinces. The Roman and Grecian languages, with their dialects, were all that a preacher then needed.

But for us all these circumstances are changed, some in our favor, some presenting difficulties, though our advantages far exceed our disadvantages. With the exception of the Turks and the Chinese, there are no civilized people now, who are not under Christian influences. The Turks, as far as Mohammedanism prevails with them, have a religion which recognises and is based upon the Old Testament. The Chinese recognise one Supreme Being, and notwithstanding the haughty and rigid policy which jealously excludes all foreign influence from their empire, Christian missions have long since penetrated there. The rest of the world, the borders of its continents and its ocean islands, has been explored. The difficulties and unfavorable circumstances which impede now the fulfilment of the Saviour's last command, are the too great prevalence of a merely nominal Christianity in Christian lands, our own wickedness, worldliness, faithlessness, and toleration of iniquities, — the number of Christian sects who spend much of their energies in opposing each other at home, and even carrying their differences into the missionary field — the perplexed relations of the governments of Christendom, who are jealous, grasping, tyrannical, and greedy of territory — the confusion and multiplicity of spoken languages, without and with written characters — the barbarity and degradation of many heathen people — and, finally, the ill name and character which Christians have acquired in many quar-

ters by introducing their worst vices, instead of the virtues of the Gospel. These are hindrances to the spread of the Gospel among those who have it not.

The incitements and helps to that work, are the large and free intercourse which is now maintained by constant voyages over the world, the facilities of transmission, of business, of correspondence, and of communicating aid, the knowledge of languages with the help of printing, the diplomatic relations and the peaceful policy which prevail, the manifest blessings of Christian civilization, of which the proofs can be shown to the most degraded savages; the generous means afforded by the rich, the devotion of willing laborers, and finally, that magnanimous, that high-souled Christian zeal, that all-enduring and ever-victorious faith, which sees in all that opposes an incentive to Christian action, and hears even in the orgies and blasphemies of Paganism nothing but the old Macedonian cry, "come over and help us."

Such then is our relative position, compared with that of the early Christians. We sit in our pleasant homes and read of all that transpires over the round globe. We know that religion, be it false or true in its forms, is the strongest element of influence over our race, it affects more largely than all else the condition, the happiness and the prospects of men. We know that Christianity is the best and truest of all religions, and that two-thirds of our race now do not enjoy its light. All our own differences about minor points are trivial, while we have and read the Bible. There is Sabaism, the worship of the heavenly host — a form of worship which has a naked and august sublimity — but not so sublime as the worship of the God of hosts. And then how fearful and appalling,

how unfit even for description are the foul devices, the hideous outrages, the loathsome and polluting idolatries, ceremonies and sacrifices, which are all that one third of our race enjoy to feed their immortal souls, to communicate with a holy God, and to prepare for an eternity which is the inheritance of God's image in all human clay!

In view of this condition of a large portion of our race, we may ask, what is the obligation of the Christian portion of the globe, to those who know not the Gospel? The obligation we all must allow is, that we in our generation, and with our abilities do our part to carry on the work which was begun by the apostles under their circumstances, and which has been continued by their successors as circumstances have changed. That we may clearly and religiously apprehend this obligation, as it declares a personal duty to each of us; let us define on what the obligation rests, what is its foundation, by what motive does it prompt or incite us?

Of course, the spontaneous answer to be given to this question is, that the command of our Saviour is the foundation of our obligation to extend the knowledge of the Gospel? "Go ye, ye Christian believers, disciples, — through all time — and evangelize all nations, initiating them into the Christian church, acquainting them with the great truths, expressed in a paternal God, the mission of a mediator, and the agency of a sanctifying Spirit, and teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Such is the command. We all look to enjoy the fulfilment of the promise which accompanies it, that the comfort and the power of the Saviour's presence shall be with his disciples till the world shall end. And if we have an interest in the promise, we are embraced

in the command. We are held to the solemn duty of extending the Gospel. "Freely ye have received, freely give." The command of Jesus Christ is our obligation.

Still every command of Jesus Christ is supported by a reason for it, an intelligible, a manifest and a sufficient reason. He requires nothing of a disciple in his private or public relations without offering a motive for all Christian actions. Plainly and satisfactorily does all Christian truth open its sanctions to the Christian heart. Judgment and eternal bliss are transferred to another and invisible world, and these are the only lessons of Christianity which a Christian needs to take on trust — all else of precept and promise has a manifest reason for it — plain, palpable evidence of its propriety, its truth and its value; and for his command that Christians christianize the world, there is a sufficient reason; in that reason lies the motive which is to prompt us. What is that reason, that motive? Let us say first what it is not.

The Saviour does not command us to evangelize the heathen, by teaching us that if they are not converted their souls will perish. Our motive for Christian effort in their behalf is not that we may save them from eternal torments. We do not believe that such is their doom. Our faith in that God, "who hath made of one blood, all that dwell on the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation," our faith in that God who is the Father of all his children, and who has hidden some tribes behind dreary deserts and impassable mountains, and has confined other tribes to the ocean islands — our faith in God, forbids us to believe or to fear that he will condemn those who know not his will because they do it not — our faith in the Christian

religion forbids us to fear, and most certainly it forbids us to preach, that the heathen are destined to such a doom. The Judge of all the earth must do right. A man is accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not. Our Saviour by his parables of the diversely divided talents, by his precepts of perfect equity, and his revelations of a just and a merciful Sovereign, has saved us from such fears for the heathen, and has forbidden any of his heralds even to whisper such a doom for the sake of obtaining money. The Christian law for earth and heaven, is all equity. They that have not the law, are a law unto themselves. It is the light, the light of truth, enjoyed or denied, which measures human responsibilities. The poor heathen is not doomed forever — away with such mockery, to utter it is either a willing deceit, or a thoughtless blasphemy. Does not the poor heathen suffer enough on earth for his want of the Gospel? Is not all the pain and all the loss borne by himself in his bewildered mind, his mangled body, his uncheered heart, his desolate home, his pangs, his fears, his wretchedness? Would you go and sit before the poor Indian of the East, who has hung himself upon a hook to die of thirst and famine beneath a blazing sun, and tell him that because he is an Indian of the East, he is an heir of wo forever? Would you tell the Hindoo mother, who smiling in hope, through the tears of maternal anguish, casts her little child into the waves of the Ganges, would you tell her that because she is a Hindoo mother, she and her child will meet the everlasting inheritance of wrath? Cruel doctrine — it has its believers — may God change their hearts; for what a judgment ought they to expect for their light, who thus judge the poor children

of pagan darkness? Fear as to the final destiny of the heathen, cannot then inspire the reason or present the motive to us for fulfilling the Saviour's command. It is sustained by a nobler reason, one which will bear the light of day, which we may deliberate and act upon with instructed and enlightened zeal, with hearty and inspiring devotion. We are prompted to labor for his kingdom among those who know him not, because we feel that we enjoy an inestimable blessing in the Christian religion, which we would communicate to others, and because we pity the wretched and debased heathen. The value of Christianity is the reason of that command, our sense of its value is our motive for fulfilling that command. There are doubtless many persons, who from mere indifference or want of proper thought, have never made an estimate of the worth of the Christian religion to one man or woman, to a community, a nation, or the world. They have never deliberately weighed it by itself or compared it with other religions. They have not counted its virtues, its direct and indirect blessings, they have not considered how deeply the heart craves truth, how seriously life needs a spiritual law, a religious guidance, they have not repeated over in their minds the number of the graces of a Christian spirit, the institutions of Christian mercy and compassion, nor followed its rays of comfort and holiness, from Judea to their own homes and chambers. There are others, however, who have gratefully and reverently made the estimate of its value, and there is prevailing a general, though a most inadequate sense of its infinite superiority to all other religions. There is not a human being within reach of its influences who is not in some respects, directly or indirectly benefited by it.

The Christian religion is the only religion, which can accompany, secure, and direct a high civilization. Our present civilization could not exist without it. We know all this, or may appreciate it, if we think only one hour upon the subject. We know the worth of our Christian blessings, of the sabbath, of the Bible, of a divine sanction to law, of domestic piety, of a religious education of children, of a perfect standard of morality, of rules for daily life, of a religion which engages the heart, which comes by the death-bed, and at a funeral, does not agonize us with any hideous spectacles, but gives the body to the common earth, and the spirit to God; we know the worth of a religion which builds a hospital for every diseased limb and organ of the human body, and calls its refuges from misery, after all the ills, and wrongs, and sufferings which are found on the earth. A sense of the value of this religion and of all the blessings of civilized life which must accompany it, is the motive which prompts us to fulfil the Saviour's command. And this motive, strong, grateful and sacred and inspiring in its very first sensation, becomes hallowed and quickened, and urged on when we compare with Christian lands the pitiful and distressing situation of the heathen. It is possible that some missionaries may have left their homes for employment, from enthusiasm, from ardent or romantic feeling, from a spirit of martyrdom or a love of enterprise, but when they have reached the field of labor, if they have had hearts, they must have felt what they could interpret only as a Divine call. Houseless, naked and bewildered, brutalized and without natural affection, suffering tenfold the self-denial and sacrifice which Christianity re-

quires, the poor heathen appear before us, and we can but weep.

It is, then, gratitude to God and pity for man — the graces of angels — and not a fear that the heathen suffer eternally, which moves the heart of a Christian to fulfil the Saviour's last command. We cannot, however, wholly exclude from our thoughts some reference to the immortal destiny and relations of the heathen. A future life, as Christianity presents it to our faith, is the extended existence of the spirit, which, after being educated on earth in a human body, is taken away by death. We conceive of that futurity as a continuation of the same spirit's life, with its consciousness and remembrances, its thoughts and its earthly discipline. The degradation and debasement of those who live in heathen lands do not perplex our faith in their immortality. For God has found a place for them all. Once he has given them life, and a clinging to life, capacities and endowments, with a sphere for their exercise, though not so high a sphere as we enjoy. It is manifestly within his power to provide for them again and forever, as he has here. But if their spirits are to bear forever the traces of their earthly development and education, poor as that is, we cannot but feel a new and quickening motive to alter for them the aspect of this life. We leave them to God for judgment, but we would aid their preparation for that heaven into which nothing unholy or unclean can ever enter.

Such, then, is the motive which addresses Christian hearts as opening to each of us the reason of the Saviour's command. We would impart the Gospel to those who have it not, because we realize its inestimable value to

the world, because we pity the misery of the heathen, and believe that their souls shall live hereafter.

Such, under our circumstances, is our obligation to those who have not the Gospel. How is the obligation to be discharged? What are we to do?

In answering this question let us keep in view one single Christian precept — that the whole race of men are our neighbors, have claims upon us. This precept needs nothing to regulate it in common action, except the principle alike of common reason and of Christianity, that no one duty is to be performed at the expense of any other duty.

It is a fact, perhaps not strange or peculiar to our circumstances, that if a man had the piety of John, the eloquence of Paul, and the wealth of a monarch, he might use and improve them all to advantage without leaving the place where he was born. He who would devote his life to any humane cause, finds all around him those who need his labors. He who has a fortune to bequeath at death may even be greatly perplexed as to the mode of bestowing it. We have the poor always with us. Ignorance asks instruction. Crime, injustice, oppression, wrong, and suffering of every conceivable kind, demand our interference and our generosity. The multiplicity and the importunity of the calls which are made upon us, leads us not to wonder that Paul should put charity above all Christian virtues. We learn soon to see the importance of discrimination. We ask help from our religion to aid us to decide. It makes all men our brethren, but it forbids us to perform one duty at the expense of another. How does this rule apply to the exercise of Christian efforts for others?

Never, in such a perplexity, shall we ask in vain for the words of our Master to direct us. Brief as are the records of his ministry, and few as are his discourses compared with what we might wish, there is a marvellous completeness in his instructions which seems to neglect nothing. In that last interview with his disciples, in which he gave them the great commission, he uttered a few significant words, which have been recorded. Those words are just to our purpose, as indicating how we are to distribute charities, and how we are to decide between nearer or more remote claims upon us. He said to his disciples, and let us mark the words — "Ye shall be witnesses of me in Jerusalem" — their own capital first — "and in all Judea" — their own State — "and in Samaria" — the next adjoining State, the residence of their own kindred, and then — "unto the uttermost parts of the earth." This, then, is the order for Christian effort, the scale of measurement for Christian charity — your own community, town, or city, your own country, the neighboring territory, and lastly, the uttermost parts of the earth. Such was the order prescribed for the apostles, and they obeyed it to the letter. They preached first in Jerusalem, and in Judea: the first place out of Judea which received the Gospel was Samaria, and then the apostles separated over the then known world.

Now it is not only possible, but it is necessary that Christians, under their circumstances, may extend their Christian efforts in all these directions — without doing wrong, or omitting duty; but whenever one doubts, he has that direction to guide him.

The effect which follows upon the dropping of a pebble into still water is the best illustration of this mode of exer-

cising Christian charity. The spot where the pebble falls sparkles and bubbles as the water is moved from its surface to its depths. And soon a little circle surrounds that spot, and the undulating waves move and move on and on, greater in circumference, wider in extent, but less in their disturbing influence, till the water feels the shock over its whole surface, though it may not show it. The centre which forms the first circle is Jerusalem, the first circle is Judea, the next Samaria — and the pervading, far-reaching influence at last reaches the uttermost parts of the earth. And fire as well as water will illustrate the same rule of Christian action. The fire of holy love must glow warmly within the secret breast, kindled at a divine source — then it will irradiate and lighten a household, a neighborhood; it will cast its beams upon the poor, the suffering, the neglected in our own community, upon those in our country who are pagans in spite of our churches, and at last the distant heathen will see the light and feel the heat of its rays. This is the Christian method. The needy and the wretched, the ignorant and the wicked near us, of our own brotherhood, have the first and the strongest claims upon us. Yet there is a principle of sincerity, a dictate of good common discretion in this matter, which it is ever safe to follow. To pretend an interest in the unfortunate at home as an excuse for neglecting others, is a resource of which many sordid and contracted persons avail themselves. The word ever on their lips is that there are so many appeals that they can listen to none, and it is doubtless true that half the members of each community give nothing to any cause. Their consciences judge them here, and God will judge them hereafter; let them beware. And there are doubtless

others who give largely to the heathen, and yet harden their hearts against their own relatives, and turn away the beggar and the orphan from their doors. These do not intend a wrong, but are misled by a misguided zeal, and will need the same mercy which we believe the ignorant heathen will receive.

By that Christian precept that all men are our neighbors and have claims upon us, qualified by the principle that no one duty is to be performed at the expense of another duty, Christian missions to the heathen present themselves to our notice, and ask us to consider our own obligations. If we do not help them we will not hinder them. Never from a Christian pulpit, never may there go forth a word of discouragement to those who perform a hard service for God and for their race. The Roman Catholics of all Christian sects have in this been the most heroic and the most devoted. Let not the sins or weaknesses of individuals be visited upon a Church. Its disciples have penetrated into regions whose very atmosphere is death; they have in very many instances been the first to explore unknown regions — the territory north, south, and west of our own States, the jungles of India, the wilds of China, the depths of Siberia, and the Isles of the Sea. They have labored and suffered beyond all our conceptions of human endurance. And some Protestant sects have emulated their devotion. Immense sums of money, costly expeditions, valuable lives have been spent like water for the heathen, and who shall say that immense and incalculable good to Christians and to heathen has not resulted from the effort? We are asked how we view this cause of missions to the heathen. We answer that we view them with approbation and hope — that we see

some circumstances about them which we could wish altered, and that we are satisfied that the most efficient aid which we can afford them is to aid them indirectly — to remain at home, to "stay by the stuff," and to befriend those around us who are in danger of being overlooked. We covet the less distinguished but equally needful work of supplying with oil, pure oil, the lamp whose rays are to shine so far. The only missions to a heathen land which we of set purpose have cherished, were those at Madras — where the Rev. Mr. Roberts died in his faithful work — and at Calcutta, where Rev. Mr. Adam was compelled by the opposition of other Christians to desist. A few years ago we were applied to to send a missionary to the Sandwich Islands. Steps were taken to that end, but were retraced, from the fear of distracting those partially civilized regions with the same doctrinal contentions which have been going on here, and which have since taken place there between Catholics and Protestants.

We are to beware of trusting the reports of mere sailors and adventurers, who speak derogatorily of the Missions, often from having had collisions with the missionaries — collisions between rum and religion. We are likewise to remember the human infirmities which we show at home, and from which missionaries are, of course, not free.

We cannot but mourn the very partial success of missions in some quarters — misspent labor, ineffectual efforts, and barren results. In part we attribute this ill success to the difficulties of the work, in part to the corrupt forms in which the Christian religion has been presented. The pure and simple truths of the Gospel, such as the paternal character of God, the mediation of Jesus Christ, the alienating influence of sin, the acceptance of

the sinner on sincere repentance and reformation — these Gospel doctrines have been more or less obscured, unquestionably, by systematic divinity, by doctrines of decrees, of election, justification, and reprobation, of eternal death already incurred by the living, of sentences of wo already passed. But these doctrinal perplexities, the gatherings of many dark ages, have of late been greatly cleared up and softened, both at home and abroad. Missionaries, too, have but slowly learned the duty of conciliation, of re-consecrating pagan altars, as did Paul, and of uniting genial civilization, and heart culture, and mental illumination, with doctrinal religion. We might likewise question the wisdom of translating the whole Bible into the various languages and dialects, which are spoken by very small tribes, and often not written at all. It is attended with very great expense. To learn the language, to put it into characters, to write out in it a whole Bible, to cast the types and print it is a mighty task. Besides, in an imperfect knowledge of a language, a translator is liable to great mistakes, which may long be lamentably perpetuated. That distinguished convert, and friend of our own missionary at Calcutta, Rammohun Roy, selected for the proud caste of his brahminical race, "the Moral Precepts of Jesus." He was harshly censured for this by some Christians; but he knew his own race best. That venerable father of all American protestant missionaries, the good and devoted John Eliot of Roxbury, the Indian apostle, spent many laborious years in translating the Bible into the language of a single tribe, and now there is not living on this globe an individual who can read even the title page, unless it be a scholar in Boston.

As a body of Christians, we are free to confess that

when we are reminded of the claims of the heathen, we reply that we honor, and revere, and feel solemnly concerned in the Saviour's last command, and that we design labors and good deeds which look intently and effectually to its fulfilment. Do we need apology for not doing any thing systematically and by organization to that great end? Let a few facts, mildly but feelingly uttered, make that apology.

It is but little more than two centuries since Christianity first breathed its prayers and reared its temples on these shores. Now there are six millions of our race in our own States, who have not the Gospel. There are three millions of foreign immigrants, refugees from misfortune or poverty in their own lands, needing to be taught the elements of government, of wisdom, of religion, and of virtue, and filling our poor-houses and prisons with objects that demand our best charities. There are nearly three millions of slaves, often denied the rights of men, and the protection of women, debased, brutalized, and passed by, by Priest and Levite, and blotting the Gospel out of the hearts and homes of many of their masters. There are nearly a million of white adults who cannot read, and who have never heard the name of Jesus. And by our very sides, in hovels, in the streets, upon the wharves — houseless, friendless, and unguided — what multitudes, what sufferers, what heathen men and women! We have heathen without crossing the ocean, we can preach to them without translating the Bible. Still the heathen have claims upon us; and in doing our duty at home, we are not to neglect our duty abroad. Let us seek to do a diffusive good. Let us begin with befriending the poor and suffering at our own doors, and thus begin to learn what charity

is. Let us promote the religious education of children at home and in the Sunday School, because children, when they grow up, are scattered to the four winds of heaven. There have been wanderers abroad, there are overseers of slaves in our own land, who would never have brought such reproaches on the Christian name and the name of man, had they been made Christians in youth, at home. Let us collect and cherish all good influences around us, by books, by efforts of reform and philanthropy. Let us keep religion pure, and make it effectual. Let us soften the asperities of sectarianism. Let us sustain that blessed institution of the Ministry to the Poor, the holy suggestion and care of some of our own lamented dead. And when we have done all this, and while we are doing, there is a way in which we may effectually aid the cause of missions even by staying at home. It is first by privately befriending any one individual whom we esteem, who is actively engaged in the work; and secondly, perhaps more easily for most persons, by contributing to the funds of the Bible Society, which is open to no objection or doubt as to the nature of its work, or the good which it accomplishes. He that will do all this may yet lack something in the sight of God who searcheth the heart — but before man he stands honorably discharged of his share in the Saviour's great commission.

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THOUGHTS

ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE;

A

CANDID ANSWER TO CANDID INQUIRERS.

By Rev. WILLIAM BARRY.

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The following tract was written under peculiar circumstances, of a local nature, and was called forth, in part, by an aggravated assault upon Unitarianism and Unitarians. This explanation, it is hoped, will afford a satisfactory apology for retaining its local character, without the alterations which would better adapt it to general reading.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER,
SCHOOL STREET.

THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

When Paul met his assembled countrymen at Rome, he was asked by them, in a spirit of candor worthy of all praise, "but we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." The same inquiry has of late been often addressed to myself, and, as I trust, in the same liberal spirit. To a candid question, I would give a candid answer. I would speak with all the freedom, and explicitness becoming the interests of divine and eternal truth. The Christian can have nothing to conceal, nor can he be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Reproach it has always borne. Reproach it has yet to bear. It is the price of truth.

The denomination of Christian believers to which I belong, are often charged with wilful concealment of their opinions. The charge is unjust and unfounded. It is contradicted by the long list of their writings read, and known of all men. We have, it is true, no general acknowledged creed, save the Bible itself. To all such we are opposed from principle, from deep and honest conviction. If any complain of this, it is to complain that we are true and consistent. That in many respects we differ, as our brethren of other denominations differ from one

another, is equally true. It is not right then, on the one hand, to charge the peculiar opinions of individuals on all; nor, on the other, to impute to me unworthy motives of concealment, in denying what I may not believe. If in my public preaching or private intercourse I should keep back my views, or evade inquiry, the charge of concealment would be just. But when I demand to be judged by myself and my own words, and not by another's, is it not the demand of justice and right?

In the course of my labors as a minister, I have endeavored to preach to you the whole counsel of God. I have from time to time explained particular doctrines and enforced particular precepts. But I have never presented a general and condensed summary of my belief. This I propose now to do. I would do it in the spirit of Christian charity. I would honor the motives, I would respect the convictions of any who differ from me. While I doubt not the general accordance of my views with those of my brethren in the Unitarian faith, there are yet points of doctrine on which opinion is divided. With us this is expected. It finds candid allowance; and I thank God, I am connected with a Christian body with whom to differ, is not to alienate; whose basis is the unity of the spirit, not a uniformity in doctrine; who can embrace in the arms of their charity all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and are the cordial, steadfast, consistent friends of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

In pursuing the plan proposed, it will at once be seen that all I can present is a brief summary of doctrine. To touch upon every disputed point, to meet every objection, to explain each doubtful text, would demand a commentary upon the Bible. In presenting my own views, truth demands that I contrast them with different or opposing

views. Let me add that I make no pretension to all knowledge. We see through a glass darkly. There are many great and important questions relating to the infinite counsel of God, and the immortal nature and endless destiny of the soul, which reason may raise, but which the Bible does not solve. I am not ashamed to confess my ignorance and darkness. I rejoice at the same time, that the great truths which are the most needful, are the most plain. There is truth enough on the surface of the Bible to save all true and humble minds. Would that these plain truths were more esteemed, pondered, and acted out! "It is," said Dr. Watts, amidst the infirmities of age and the approach of death, "it is the plain teachings of the Gospel that are my support, and I bless God they are plain teachings, that do not require much labor and pains to understand them."

The first inquiry which most naturally presents itself, is the BIBLE. What thinkest thou of this?

I answer, that I receive the Bible as containing the revealed will of God. I hold it as the supreme, authentic and sufficient guide in all matters of religious belief and practice. I hold to nothing as above it or equal to it. I hold to its universal, its exclusive authority — that no one has a right to add to, or to take from it. And hence my objection to human creeds. To these as mere confessions of private belief, I make no opposition. But as having authority over conscience, or as conditions of admission to the Christian Church, I contest their obligation and validity. If they express no more than is contained in the Bible, they seem to me needless. If they alter or pervert the divine word, they are pernicious.

I believe, too, in the *inspiration* of the Bible; that it is inspired as no other book is inspired. The inspiration of the sacred writers I believe to have been divine, immediate, supernatural, communicating truths which reason alone could not with certainty discover, and affording indisputable evidence that the truth revealed is the will of the divine mind. But since from the nature of the case, and the absence of all experience in us, the precise nature and mode of a supernatural inspiration could be matters of consciousness only to those who were the subjects of it, I hold to the reality and authority of miracles, as the divine credentials of the sacred writers. These bear witness, clear and authentic, that holy men spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

I hold, moreover, that the Bible is sufficient for its own interpretation; that it needs not the aid of learning and great parts and human wisdom, to make known to the pure and humble minded its most important truths. Still, clothed as these are in human language, presented on various occasions, and in different points of view, and under a wide variety of illustration, I find there is need of careful thought and discrimination, of comparing scripture with scripture, to arrive at a distinct view of the Divine Mind. Hence the use of reason in the study of the Bible becomes indispensable. Its province, as I understand it, is not to determine beforehand, but to discover and learn what the mind of God, as revealed, is, and, this ascertained, to yield it full and cordial assent, even though, in some respects, it transcend and baffle the understanding. But suppose, you ask, it arrives at results which *contradict* reason? The supposition, I reply, is impossible. If the inspiration of God gave man understanding, its pure teachings cannot be opposed by

other inspirations from the same divine source. If a result of my inquiry plainly contradict my reason, the laws of the mind compel me irresistibly to believe that I have mistaken the meaning of the word, sooner than to believe that the inspiration of God can contradict itself. My judgment in such cases must be suspended till the truth is made clear to me.

But when I speak of the use of reason in interpreting the word, I claim its exercise in no sense which shall exclude that of the heart, of the sentiments. I believe that religion has to do with man's whole spiritual nature. It appeals to our deepest inward experience. It implies an active, healthful, pure sensibility of soul in him who would obtain full and consistent views of its truths. To the mind that is blinded by pride or prejudice, or corrupted by sensuality and sin, the light from heaven shines in vain. The truly humble, sincere, and good, have a witness in themselves, in the answering voice of the Spirit of God, and of goodness within them, to the teachings of Heaven. This is that "Spirit of Truth," referred to and promised by the Saviour. It is to be sought and cherished by self-communion and prayer. Than the necessity of spiritual help, the help of the Spirit of God, given in answer to earnest and persevering prayer, no truth seems to me more important, none more consoling. It reminds us that the humblest mind may thus become rich in the highest wisdom, that the wayfaring, though a fool, need not err from the path of peace and eternal life.

Such are my thoughts of the Bible; and let none say that I undervalue it, that I set my reason above it, that I deny its inspiration, that I handle and judge, and use it at my pleasure. No just man will say this. No Christian can innocently give currency to so wrong and culpa-

ble an aspersion. That sacred book is given to all as freely as are the air and the light of heaven. It is mine in a sense as full and unrestricted as it can be another's. It bears with it the most sacred charge man can receive; nor has any a right to judge my conscience, or to stand between me and the awful word. I must obey God rather than man. To his word I desire to give the first place in my reverence and love. It records the only name given among men whereby they can be saved. There is none other to whom we may go, to find the words of eternal life.

But the Bible is characterized by certain leading and prominent doctrines. What thinkest thou of these? I first remark that when I read the Old Testament, I discover there a single, undivided, pre-eminent object of faith — GOD. He is held forth in terms as clear and distinct as language can afford, as one Being. "The Lord our God is one Lord." "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me."* In the teachings of Jesus Christ, I discover the same doctrine of one God, represented in the same clear and emphatic language, but with the simple addition, GOD the FATHER. This epithet I take to express his essentially parental character, as well as his peculiar relation as the "God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." But there is to my mind this observable difference between the Old Testament and the New; that

* The use of the plural pronoun, as when it is declared, "let *us* make man," is so clearly a figure of speech, a common idiom, that it is surprising it should ever be cited as proving a plurality of person in the Deity. I quote the explanation of Professor Stuart, (*Heb. Gram.* p. 326.) which is the testimony of all grammarians. "For the sake of emphasis, the Hebrews commonly employed most of the words which signify Lord, God, &c. in the plural form, *but with the sense of the singular*. This is called the *pluralis excellentiæ*," or plural of excellence.

whereas in the former but *one* pre-eminent object of faith is held out, in the latter there are *three*, denominated the Father, Son and Spirit. In this three-fold faith are believers directed to be baptized. What thinkest thou of these?

The expressions trinity, trinity in unity, triune God, three persons and one God, as applied to them, I cannot adopt, I cannot assent to. They are unscriptural, unauthorized. Not a single passage of the genuine text of scripture can I find, that in any way countenances them; none that conveys an idea answering to these expressions.* They are found in creeds and doxologies, but they are not found in the Bible. Not a solitary text of scripture can be produced, asserting that there are three persons and one God. This objection is in my view fatal. If the voice of inspiration had distinctly declared "the Lord our God exists in three persons," "to us there is one God, the Father, Son and Spirit," I must believe it. But when it as explicitly asserts, "the Lord our God is one Lord," "to us there is one God, the FATHER," I must for the same reason believe this. I cannot adopt unauthorized expressions which are at variance from, which contradict it.

In the sacred writings of the New Testament, I find

* The only passage in the Bible that can in the smallest degree sanction the expressions above referred to, is the 1 John v. 7. The fact that this passage is still read in churches, and referred to as genuine, renders it necessary to reiterate the fact of its undoubted spuriousness, as admitted by commentators of every sect. The declaration of the Eclectic Review, whose orthodoxy is beyond dispute, is full and explicit. "We are unspeakably ashamed that any modern divine should have fought for the retention of a passage so indisputably spurious. We could adduce half a dozen, or half a score of passages, of ample length, supported by better authority than this, but which are rejected in every printed edition and translation."

certain representations respectively of the Father, Son and Spirit. These I hold to and believe. I hold to and believe them all. I hold them in substance as follows.

I. It is the Christian doctrine of the Father, that he is the one living and true God of the ancient covenant. "This is life eternal," said the Saviour, "that they might know THEE the only true God." (John xvii. 3.) "To us," said Paul, "there is but one God, the Father." (1 Cor. viii. 6.) "God, who in times past, spake unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. i. 1.) The God of the new covenant is the God of the old, sometimes referred to as God, sometimes as the Father, at others as God the Father. As the belief in a Supreme Being, one infinite and all-perfect mind, lies at the foundation of all true religion, I hold with peculiar strength of conviction to the oneness of God. I cannot for a moment entertain an unauthorized conception, which sullies the purity of that great and simple idea. It stands out in characters of light in the teachings of the Saviour and his Apostles. It is corroborated by their frequent prayers. The idea of plurality is no where intimated. The idea of oneness is inwoven and implied in the very nature of the Christian revelation itself. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." I believe, then, in the Father, as the one living and true God. I believe in the oneness and harmony of his attributes, as well as of his person. His nature is love. His character is parental. "God is love." He is "God the Father." The first and great command is, that we love the Lord our God, with all the heart and soul and mind and strength.

II. Of the Son what thinkest thou? My first remark is, that of the essential *nature* of Christ, I presume to

have no conception. The New Testament has nothing to say of his "nature." It does say, and it is the very language of our Lord, "no man knoweth the Son but the Father." With what is above my comprehension, concealed from my knowledge, I judge myself to have no concern. It will at once be understood, then, that I do not adopt the doctrine of *two natures* in Christ. I do not assert that this is not true, but I hold that it is not revealed, that there is no such language, that there is nothing even intimating that it is an article of faith. If it be a doctrine of Christianity, it must appear so. Where does it appear? Is it said that the Scriptures speak of Christ as having been in the form of God, and taking upon him the form of a servant? But form is not nature, nor is there anything peculiar, distinct, essential in the nature of a servant. I understand by Christ's being in the form of God, his possessing those divine and supernatural qualities which made him like God, and by his taking the form of a servant, his assuming the lowly condition of poverty, and coming not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

I believe in the Son as he is revealed, and all that is revealed and declared of Him I hold to. I receive him as the Son of God and the Son of man. I ascribe to Him all those exalted offices which appertain to Him as a Prince and a Saviour. When his being commenced I know not. Of what is termed his pre-existence, I see much and strong proof, which constrains me to believe in it. But it is attended with difficulties which dispose me to regard with charity such as honestly deny it. I believe that he came from the Father; that all power was given him in heaven and on earth; that he spake not in his own name, but in the name of Him who sent him; that the works which he wrought were not his, but the

works of the Father, that was in him. His authority, therefore, is to me, the authority of God and not man; and whosoever receiveth him, receiveth the Father that sent him.

I believe, moreover, that God was manifested to the world in the Son; that the Son is the visible image of the invisible Father, so that the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. In this sense, I apprehend it is, that he that hath the Son hath the Father also, that he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father. It is to me a truth inexpressibly dear and sacred, that the moral perfections, the spiritual glory of the Father — the King eternal, immortal and invisible, have been unveiled to human eyes, and embodied in a human form, and beautifully illustrated in human life.

I hold too to the moral and spiritual oneness of the Father and the Son; but in no sense to impair the undivided oneness of God, the Father. It is to me a unity, not of person, but of will, of spirit, of purpose, of affection. For while the Saviour declares, "I and the Father are one, he also prays for all who believe, "that they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

I believe that in a few passages the name of God is applied to Christ.* I find it in like manner applied to Moses, to David, to those "to whom the word of God

* It is proper to remark that several passages in which the name of God is supposed to be applied to Christ, are destitute of all genuine authority. Acts xx. 28; "The *church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood," should read as Trinitarian writers of the highest reputation agree — "*the church of the Lord*."— Acts vii. 59; "And they stoned Stephen calling upon '*God*,' and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The word "God," it will be seen, is printed in italics in the English Bibles, to signify that it

came." I find it applied to the Saviour in the epistle to the Hebrews, in the very same language and form in which it was applied by the Psalmist, to the king of Israel.* I am compelled then to believe that it was applied in an inferior sense to the Saviour as to the others; since if it proved the absolute deity of Christ, it must prove also the deity of Moses and David. Nor have I any hesitation or doubt in thus believing, when the apostle explicitly asserts, "though there be that are *called* gods," yet "to us there is one God the Father." I have no difficulty in thus believing with the sanction of the clear, simple, unqualified declaration of our Lord himself — "My Father is greater than I."

I believe, then, of the Son, all that is revealed respecting his divine authority and dignity, his offices and character, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world; and I believe that we are hence to "honor the Son, even as we honor the Father." This honor I hold is to be shown, by "doing the things he has commanded." If prayer to him were demanded of me, my prayers I should unhesitatingly address to him. But so far is this from being in a single instance done, the opposite is distinctly enjoined. "Pray," is his command, "to the *Father* which is in secret." "In that day," is the Saviour's own language, "ye shall ask me nothing, but whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

is no part of the original Greek, but was inserted by the translators. — 1 John iii. 16; "Hereby we perceive the love of '*God*,' because he laid down his life for us." The word "God" is here no part of the original, and is generally printed with italic letters in English to signify the fact.

* Compare Heb. i. 8, 9, and the 45th Psalm, the latter clearly addressed to the King of Israel.

But while I hold that *prayer* to Christ is thus positively forbidden, without condition or qualification, I do not understand that Christians are debarred from a spiritual communion with their Lord; nor that they may not indulge their sentiments of affectionate gratitude, honor and praise to the "author and finisher" of their faith. If I cannot join in the common doxologies to the Father, Son and Spirit, it is because they are without an example, without the shadow of authority from the New Testament. Not an instance is to be adduced of praise addressed to the Spirit. But cordially and reverently can I unite in the *scriptural* ascription of praise and thanksgiving, "to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Such are my thoughts of the Son, leaving others relating to the purpose of his mission, to be introduced hereafter. It will be perceived that I do not believe Christ to have been a *mere man;* that he spake only upon human authority; that there was nothing divine in him or his doctrine. This ungenerous calumny has for years been circulated, though publicly and repeatedly protested against. I must still protest against the misrepresentation, as unjust and unchristian. No man has a right to bring the imputation when it is openly and explicitly denied; and I desire to be understood as having feeling and sensibility to this wrong. Our opinions are as dear to us, as those of others can be to them; nor do we differ from them more than they do from us. If it be to them matter of pain and grief, to hear their views of Christ and his doctrine misrepresented, denied or reviled, it is none the less so to us. The honor of our Lord we cannot hold in light esteem; and how can we truly honor him,

but by saying and doing the things we believe him to have commanded.

III. It remains to speak of the Holy Spirit. Of this object of faith what thinkest thou? I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe it to be emphatically the Spirit, the active, effectual, all-powerful operation of God. It is always called the Spirit, — Holy Spirit, — Spirit of God, — never, God the Spirit. I do not believe that it has a separate personality from the Father and the Son. It is nowhere declared to be a separate person. The sacred writers refer to the Spirit and describe its action by the use of personal epithets, in the same manner as they speak of Wisdom and the Word; nor can I believe that they intend to set forth a distinct personality in the one, any more than in the others. My conviction on this point is strengthened by the plain and undeniable fact, that the Spirit is repeatedly referred to as a power, an influence. It is said "to be poured out," "to be given without measure," to be "quenched;" language which can have no meaning, if spoken of a person, a distinct and separate being. My conviction is strengthened by the additional and equally undeniable fact, that neuter and not personal pronouns are generally used in the original Greek, in speaking of the Spirit and the Word * Besides, is it to be presumed that the sacred writers — that the

*The distinct personality of the "Word," as used in the first chapter of John's Gospel, and which is supposed by many to prove the deity of Christ, is clearly set aside by the fact alluded to above, that neuter pronouns are used in referring to it. Dr. Campbell, in his translation of this Gospel, has justly adhered to the rule of grammar. His rendering of the first four verses is as follows: — "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. *This* was in the beginning with God, all things were made by *it*, and without *it*, not a single creature was made. In *it* was life, and the life was the light of men."

Saviour and his Apostles could have known and believed in the separate and distinct personality of the Spirit, without leaving some palpable proof of the fact, by expressions of personal attachment, or offerings of honor and praise, like those which are used towards the Father and the Son? But of this not an example can be produced. The language of personal love, reverence and honor towards the Spirit is utterly wanting. The Spirit is always referred to as the Spirit of God — that which appertains to the Father, emanating from his mind, executing his will. While, therefore, I hold with solemn and grateful reverence to the reality, the necessity, the divine and all-powerful efficacy of the Spirit's agency, and most of all in the great work of personal religion, in the sanctification of the human heart, I cannot ascribe to it a separate, essential personality. I hold it as the scriptures present it, to be the Spirit of God, not God, the Spirit.

Such, in short, is my belief as regards the Christian doctrine of the Father, Son, and Spirit. There is a form of belief which holds these as three great modes of manifestation of the one divine and infinite mind. According to this, God has been manifested as the Father, in the creation and government of the world; he was manifested again to men in his moral character and spiritual glory, in the Son; and he is manifested further in his spiritual operation upon the soul, through the dispensation of Christ, and in the lives of faithful believers. To this form of belief, called, I believe, modal Trinitarianism, I have no particular objection, except to its speculative character. It impairs not the oneness of the Godhead. And yet the proper distinction between the Unitarian and the Trinitarian is never to be lost sight of. The former holds to the belief of one God in one person, the latter

of one God in three persons. To the former I am constrained to give my full and entire belief. It is to me the plain doctrine of inspiration. It was declared amidst the awful scenes which ushered in the annunciation of the law on Sinai; it was confirmed from the lips of the Saviour; it was reiterated in the teachings of faithful Apostles. "The Lord our God is one Lord." "To us there is one God the Father;" and yet to the belief in the Son and Spirit as associate objects of Christian faith, I yield my devout and cordial assent. It is consecrated by the waters of baptism. It is recognised in that Christian benediction, repeated by holy lips from age to age, and yet to be repeated while the throne of Christ shall stand, —"the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

In dismissing these views, let me say, that I have uttered them from my deepest convictions. To the word and the testimony I appeal. With these credentials in my hand, have I expressed my explicit denial of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and the separate personality of the Spirit. If I reject these doctrines, it is not merely that they are dark, mysterious, contradictory, perplexing, but because to me the Bible does not teach — does not sanction them. While the simple ideas of God, as the one author of creation and Father of our Spirits, of Jesus as his Son, and our common Saviour, and of the Spirit of God, as our effectual help and comforter, these are truths which shine forth as light upon the sacred page, which he that runs may read. They are the truths which the heart seeks, upon which, in perplexity and darkness and controversy, it rests and trusts. In its ignorance, its frailty, its sinful

ness, its sorrows, it is these plain and simple truths, uttered from divine and sacred lips, confirmed by miracles of mercy, and breathed forth in tones of compassion and love, which speak peace, and pardon, and life, and hope. And shall it be said that he who truly holds and strives to live up to them is no Christian? Shall he be denounced as an infidel, and set up as the scoff and derision of the weak and thoughtless, because, with the Bible in his hand, he is faithful to God and his own conscience, and loves the truth better than he loves his ease? If there be those who have the heart to perpetrate this gross injustice, we have the satisfaction of remembering that the truth is worth its cost, though that cost be the altered eye of hard unkindness, and the enmity of those whom our religion bids us love and bless. Truth and justice are in higher keeping than ours. We must abide God's time. Only let our conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. Return no railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Next to my views of the Bible, the Godhead and Christ, I pass to speak of the *nature of man*. And it will be observed that I speak of man's *nature*, not *character*; what he originally is made, not what he makes himself. The distinction is real and vital. It is ever to be borne in mind, to prevent confusion and mis-statement. It is often said of us, that we deny the depravity of man. This we do not deny. This we have never denied. What we reject is *natural* depravity, not *actual* depravity. We say that *men* are depraved, but not that their *nature* is. I speak then of the original nature of man, as it comes from the hand of the Creator. What thinkest thou of this?

The scriptures assure me that man was created in the image of God; that when he looked upon this most glorious of his works, he called it good. I cannot then attribute to my nature, to the original nature of any human being, a vicious, corrupt and sinful constitution, unless the authentic voice of inspiration assure me explicitly of the fact. How then does the case stand? Now the Scriptures do clearly set forth that sin entered, and hath abounded in the world; that there is none that doeth good and sinneth not; and experience verifies these declarations. But the Bible nowhere traces all this to man's nature, to an original, entire corruption of heart. The idea of *original* sin is refuted by its very definition of sin, as "a transgression of the law." The idea of a totally depraved nature is contradicted by the positive declaration of the Saviour — "of such is the kingdom of heaven." The fact of sin in a human being now, no more proves a corrupted nature in him, than it did in Adam. If Adam could fall from innocence without impeaching the purity of his nature, so may any, so may all of his descendents.

I hold then to the original innocence of the human soul. I believe it to have been created capable of both good and evil; and as the animal nature first appears and afterwards that which is spiritual, the tendency and liability to sensual excess and depraved affections is imminent and certain, unless controlled and counteracted by a virtuous education and the Spirit of God. I believe that the infant spirit is consigned in its helplessness to the custody and charge of loving parents, that it may be trained and sanctified from its birth; that its pliant heart may be moulded according to the will of God and in the image of the Saviour. Nor can I question that there are and have been those, the Samuels of the Christian

age, thus trained and nurtured — those, whose memory, amidst the sad consciousness of erring frailty and deep unworthiness, could recall no period of life when religion with its service, its duties and its hopes were not dear to them. I believe that the power and efficacy of Christian education are not believed in and trusted and acted out as they should be and will be; that Christians have no adequate faith as yet, in the practicability of early piety. We read in prophetic vision, of the lambs to be borne in the Saviour's bosom. Is it chimerical to believe there are such now, whom he owns and loves as his, bright jewels in his crown of joy?

But the infant, though innocent, and dear to God as to man, is not holy. Holiness is no gift of nature. Natural birth does not constitute man religious. Holiness is the work of the soul — the fruit of the spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit." I believe then in the necessity of regeneration — that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." By regeneration, I understand the beginning of spiritual life, the inward, progressive life of the soul, as a believing, trusting, obedient child of God and disciple of Jesus Christ. Whenever that life is commenced, the soul that possesses it is born again — be it in childhood or youth, in manhood or age, — be it matter of distinct and present consciousness or not. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is every one born, that is born of the spirit." I believe that this regeneration may take place in early life; that it was intended to take place under the pious nurture of Christian parents. But education fails, alas! too often of this, its highest end. The uncultured soil of

the heart is covered with a noxious growth. Sin abounds. The law of the members prevails over the law of the mind. The world is covered with the sad trophies of sensuality, and vice, and crime, and irreligion. What lands are dark with heathen ignorance and degradation! What multitudes in Christian countries live without God, violators of his laws, brutalized by lust, dead in trespasses and sins! What thinkest thou of this? The question opens to us the plan of Christian salvation. I believe that the way of redemption has been opened through the mediation of Christ, as a divine and all-sufficient Saviour. My views of it I will present as fully as I can.

I believe, then, that this method of salvation had its origin in the love of God; that he wills, he desires that all should be saved — saved from sin, purified from its guilt, emancipated from its bondage, regenerated and renewed in the spirit of their mind, and brought into that state of inward purity and consistent virtue, which harmonizes the soul of man with the Spirit of God, the divine and all-perfect mind. Where then is the obstacle, the hindrance to this end? It is two-fold. There is first an obstacle in the law of God's moral government. There is, secondly, an obstacle in the moral freedom of man's nature. There is an obstacle in the moral law of God. That law demands genuine repentance, effectual reformation, as the condition of forgiveness, inward purity and goodness as the condition of inward happiness. That law is fixed and unalterable. Though, therefore, the love of God for man is unbounded, and he seeks and desires his happiness and well-being, his immutable laws forbid that any should be happy, till he is inwardly good; with the obdurate and impenitent, justice must have its course. Then there is an obstacle in the moral free-

dom of man's nature. Repentance, to be genuine, must be my own free act. It cannot be forced. It cannot be done by another in my stead. Though then it be the will of the all-merciful Father that I repent and be saved, it can have effect only by my own free choice. Not that the sinner can save himself, without the help and agency of God's assisting grace; but there must be concurrent action, effort, prayer and self-devotion on his own part. Then it is to be remembered how great and formidable is this latter hindrance; how a life of transgression weakens and crushes man's moral faculties; how it makes him to feel the helpless impotence of his spiritual poverty and deadness.

How, then, are these obstacles removed? Let us first ask, where lies the main hindrance? Most clearly with man. God cannot pardon, because man does not repent. Reach only and convince the erring mind, and enable it to fulfil the conditions of pardon, and all obstacle to the free and forgiving mercy of God is removed. Man, then, is to be sought, to be enlightened, to be moved. Truth, argument, promise and warning are to be urged upon him; all that can justly alarm his fears, and inspire his hopes, and move his sympathies, and rouse, strengthen and direct his will. This, I conceive, is done in the mediation of Christ; and how?

I commence, then, by observing that there is one word which, in my view, embodies the great and simple idea of the Saviour's mission. It is the word *atonement* or *reconciliation*. This word atonement, it will be remembered, is but once used in the New Testament. Its meaning there I will give in the language of Professor Stuart, in his commentary upon the passage. "The word," he says, "means reconciliation, and such is the

sense in which our English translators here used the word atonement — quasi at-one-ment." Now this idea of atonement, of reconciliation, overspreads the Christian scriptures. The word of Christ is called the word of reconciliation; the ministry of the Gospel, the ministry of reconciliation. God is said to have reconciled us to himself by the death of his son, and Paul prayed men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. The purpose of Christ, then, was to reconcile, to bring at one, those who were in a state of estrangement and alienation. Upon whom did this atonement take effect? It is the common doctrine that it took effect upon God. Is it the doctrine of scripture? Paul says, in the only passage where the word is used, that *we* have received the atonement, — "by whom we have received the atonement." The atonement was to take effect not upon God, but upon us. So of the word reconciliation, it is set forth, "God hath reconciled us to himself," not himself to us, "by the death of his Son." It was man, not the infinite Father, who needed to be reconciled. The arms of parental love are ever open to embrace the returning prodigal.

While, then, I hold to the Christian doctrine of the atonement, I desire to be explicit in the assertion of my belief that it was intended to have effect primarily upon man, and not God; and so far as it does take effect, does it remove all hindrance to the salvation of the sinner. The obstacle in the depraved will of man is taken away, by the motives and aids to genuine repentance and faith; the obstacle in the moral law of God, by the fulfilment of the condition on which mercy is bestowed. By what means is this atonement or reconciliation effected?

First, I believe that Christ preached the doctrine of repentance. His first charge was the call to repent. It was

repeated by his apostles to Jew and Pagan. Repentance, forgiveness, remission of sins, these were the burthen of the primitive ministry. The ministry in all ages must be powerless, which is not charged and quickened by their solemn appeals. I believe then in the doctrine of repentance; in its necessity, its availableness, its efficacy to all. I believe it to be no mere sorrow, compunction or regret, not the ungrateful lamentation over the vileness of our nature, or vague acknowledgment of sin in general; but the deep and heartfelt sensibility to actual sin — to genuine guilt — the sins of the heart and the lips and the life, the sins against God as well as against man — the sins of selfishness and impurity, of injustice and uncharitableness, all that defiles the soul and alienates it from communion with God and the love of man; and this, too, united with that genuine humility, which looks to God for pardoning mercy, and testifies its sincerity, by a new and holy life. Such, as I view it, is the Christian doctrine of repentance.

I believe, too, in the forgiveness of sin, through the mercy of God, upon repentance, and only upon repentance. I hold it to have been the great purpose of the Saviour to reveal and assure this. The doctrine of forgiveness was not new; it had been declared before. Nothing can exceed the force and beauty with which the Prophets and the Psalms describe the free and forgiving mercy of God, the gracious and long-suffering, plenteous in mercy and redemption, unless it be the simple and moving picture of that mercy, as displayed in the parable of the prodigal son. But the Jewish dispensation was given in an age of darkness and ignorance, to a people wedded to idolatry and surrounded by its bloody rites. It was necessary to separate them from the world around,

to accommodate the forms of religion to their low and darkened minds, to bind them by a ceremonial which should strike the senses and hold them by the omnipotent force of habit, and make them a distinct and peculiar people. Hence the introduction of sacrifices. They were appointed conditions of pardon and forgiveness. The law required more than repentance; it demanded a sacrifice. But the outward sacrifice was soon more thought of than the inward repentance; the offering of the flock, than the sin of the soul; and prophets lamented in the name of the Lord, over the degeneracy of Israel, and declared, "your burnt offerings are not acceptable to me." That sacrifices were but arbitrary, appointed conditions of pardon, as a part of the Jewish ritual, is clearly set forth in the striking language of the Prophet Micah, (vi. 6.) "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."

Such I apprehend to have been the nature of the ancient sacrifices. They were appointed, and arbitrary conditions of pardon, not its price. They declared and set it forth; they did not procure it. They were not a satisfaction to justice; they were not punitive, nor the substitute for punishment. They were a token of the forgiving love of God, as they were to be expressive of right

affections in man. The mercy of God is free and unpurchased. "To him belongeth mercy." "His tender mercies are over all his works."

Now the Christian doctrine of forgiveness, as I understand it, sets forth the offer of free forgiveness upon repentance. Unlike the Mosaic religion, it demands no ceremonial rites, no sacrificial oblations. These ceased with the ancient covenant. They closed with that solemn and impressive event the death of Christ, which ushered in the spiritual glory of the new and everlasting covenant. By many, that event, the death of Christ, is believed to have been a literal sacrifice for sin. The doctrine is attended to my mind with insuperable difficulty. I can see in it a resemblance, an analogy to the ancient sacrifices, just as the apostles did; but no more. My trust for forgiveness is in the mercy of God, as revealed and assured to me by Jesus Christ. He hath declared the forgiveness of sins. It was the express purpose of his mission, assured to us in the very language of the Evangelist, (Luke i. 77,) "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, *through the tender mercy of our God.*" Does any question this? Does any doubt that salvation, that forgiveness flows from the inherent, original, unpurchased mercy of God the Father? I ask him only to read that beautiful parable of the prodigal son, simply and clearly as it sets forth the parental love and compassion of the Father of mercy; and then to say if the idea of substituted punishment, of vicarious atonement, of satisfaction to offended justice, could possibly have had a place in the mind of him who uttered it. "And he said, I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee and am no more

worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." This is the Christian doctrine of forgiveness upon repentance.

But the Christian plan of reconciliation demands not only repentance towards God; it unites with it faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What thinkest thou of this? I reply that I believe in the necessity and the power of faith. This principle I hold to be not a mere assent to truth, not the profession of certain doctrines, not a vague acknowledgment of Christ and his religion. I believe it to be a sentiment of the heart, inspiring trust, gratitude and love toward our Lord. I believe it to be an active principle of virtuous obedience; that it works by love and purifies the heart and overcomes the world. When I observe the importance ascribed to this great principle of faith by the Saviour and his Apostles, the all-sustaining, all-conquering power attributed to it, I cannot conceive that it is anything formal, technical, obscure and mysterious. I cannot believe that it is to be judged by sectarian opinions or party zeal. Faith, in its nature, is an inward sentiment. It points us to the invisible life of the soul. This can be known in perfection only to the omniscient eye; and in his sight, faith has a justifying power. There may be errors of ignorance, sins of frailty and imperfection, which the Christian deplores, and strives against and repents of. But God looketh upon the heart. Where the heart is right in his sight and there is a true and living faith within its possessor is justified, is accounted righteous with God. This principle of justification by

faith, that a man is held good before God, by what he is in himself, by his habitual spirit, temper, principles and character, seems to me a great and most important, and yet a very simple truth. The inward faith of the soul then is known in perfection only to the all-seeing eye. How shall it be judged by man? My answer is in the words of the Saviour, "by their fruits ye shall know them." Beyond this I hold that none has a right to go. We are to judge the tree by its fruit. If the outward life be marked with Christian rectitude and goodness, and there is shown forth the consistency and blamelessness of genuine and conscientious virtue, there is and must be faith. I have no authority to question or impeach it. Its possessor may hold to different opinions, worship in a different church, and bear a different name from myself; but I must forbear to make them tests. His inward faith is between himself and God. I can judge it only by the tenor of his life. I may as properly deny that a tree in my orchard is alive, when it is covered with foliage and bending with ripening fruit, as deny the genuine faith of him, who, while he owns the authority of Christ, *does* the things he has commanded.

Of the doctrine of good works what thinkest thou? I believe in the necessity of good works, of a good life, toward God and toward man, in secret and in public, in word and in deed. I hold that they are to be maintained, and affirmed, and honored, and set forth, as good in themselves and as acceptable to God. I believe they are never to be slighted nor disparaged, by ungenerous suspicion or uncharitable speech. The Christian is not only to "maintain" them, but to be "zealous" of them; to be "thoroughly furnished," to be "well reported of" for them; to be "rich," to be a "pattern" in them;

that the world by his "good works may glorify God." I hold that good works, a good life, are the proper and scriptural evidence of sincere and holy affections; that there is no true inward grace where they are wanting. As when a tree yields no fruit and shows no flower or leaf, we must believe the vital principle extinct, so without the fair fruits of righteousness, without consistent rectitude and virtue, there is no genuine piety, no saving faith.

Is there merit in good works? The word merit has two senses. In one sense it denotes excellence, value, worth. It denotes in another, desert, a claim and title to reward. Can we say then that good works have merit in the first sense? Are they excellent, valuable, worthy, and in this sense meritorious? I answer in the words of Paul, "these things are *good* and profitable unto men." Paul calls them good; why should not I? Have good works merit in the second sense; have they a claim and title to reward? I answer in the words of Jesus, "they that have *done good* shall come forth to the resurrection of life." If ye have fed the hungry and clothed the naked, "inasmuch as ye have *done it* unto the least of these my disciples, ye have done it unto me. Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." I answer in the words of the beloved disciple, "Blessed are they that *do* his commandments, that they *may have right* to the tree of life." With such testimony before me, I cannot say that good works have no merit in the sense of desert. God has *promised* to reward them. He has made them the condition, he has given to them a title to inward peace and blessedness and joy. Can I say they have no worth, no merit in the sight of God?

But while all this I hold to and believe, and am not ashamed to acknowledge, in respect to good works, I hold yet farther, that eternal life and blessedness is the gift of God; that no merit of man can ever claim it; that no good works can adequately deserve it. Whose works are only and always good! If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Though, therefore, it be as I judge, the Christian doctrine of good works, that they are good in themselves and acceptable to God, and that every man shall receive according to what he hath done, the deep sense of imperfection and unworthiness must ever forbid the thought of claiming heaven as a just reward, of being saved by good works. I believe that none can be saved without them; that God approves and loves and rewards them, and that they are a reward unto themselves. But the Christian's trust is not in his poor obedience, in his good works. It is in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ.

But the Christian doctrine of reconciliation holds out powerful motives to repentance, faith and good works. It sets forth the great doctrine of retribution, of a moral and righteous retribution. What thinkest thou of this? I believe, then, in the doctrine of a just and particular retribution; that "every man shall receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil." I believe that "God hath appointed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." I believe that "the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of

damnation." The precise and full meaning of all these declarations, I presume not to understand, I am incapable of explaining. They remind me that I am accountable — that retribution is certain. They intimate to my mind, that the moral government I see around and within me, shall continue through my whole being, in this world and in all worlds, in time and in eternity; that I am to anticipate a more perfect unfolding and consummation of the moral purposes of the Creator hereafter, when "God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

I believe, accordingly, in the doctrine of probation — by which I understand the moral connection of this life with the future; the state of the former being a state of trial and preparation for the latter. This is distinctly set forth to me in the analogies of the sacred writings, in the comparison of human life with seed time and harvest; assuring us that as a man soweth, that shall he also reap; that the harvest is the end of the world; and in the declaration, that they that have done good, shall *come forth*, at a time future and subsequent, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. Is it asked if that probation extends beyond this life? I reply, that if I consulted only the dictates of reason, I should have hope that it might. But that hope finds no full confirmation in the teachings of the New Testament; but rather much that so plainly contradicts or is inconsistent with it, that I dare not hold out

the language of hope to the finally impenitent and hardened. I am constrained to declare and to preach, that now is the accepted time, that now is the day of salvation.

But while I hold to this view of probation, I hold with equal strength of conviction to the belief, that the retribution of God's moral government is inflicted in mercy; that punishment is his strange work; that he seeks in it the restoration of the guilty; that it is intended to aid and further reformation. God corrects men in love and compassion. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

Of the duration of future punishment, what thinkest thou? I answer that I nowhere find authority in scripture to limit it. It is expressed by epithets, conveying as fully as language can, the idea of endless duration. Others may discover intimations in the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, which are hidden from myself. By the punishment of sin, I understand the moral consequences connected by the immutable law of God with moral evil; and these consequences, as I judge, the scriptures represent as endless. Whether these consequences are consistent with the possible recovery of the sinner to holiness, I have not the light, nor the authority, to declare. I dare not presume to be wise above what is written.

Of the final salvation of all men, what thinkest thou? The same question, in substance, was once addressed to the Saviour. He replied to it in this wise: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able." With a declaration before me, like this, uttered from lips filled with the wisdom of God; intimating an answer, if direct answer it be, in the negative, I cannot hold and teach that all will be finally saved. I read, moreover, of those "whose

end is destruction." I read of the "disobedient who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." The precise and particular import of these expressions, I am incompetent to apprehend. They possess to me a deep solemnity. Experience reveals to us, even in this life, the deplorable consequences of confirmed impenitence, and abandoned guilt. Humanity mourns over the wreck of ruined spirits, too often, alas! hastened to destruction by the uncharitable neglect, the unpitying scorn of the world.

But while I am constrained, from the deepest conviction, thus to believe, let me add that with equal confidence do I hold, that the perfect wisdom and impartial love of God, in the creation of man and the mission of the Saviour, will be finally and gloriously made known. I see proof of this in the promise to Abraham, that in him and in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. I see it in the sayings of the ancient prophets, in the distinct foretelling of the days, when all shall know the Lord, from the least even unto the greatest. I see it in the strong declaration by the Apostle of the purpose of God, to "gather together in one, all things in Christ, which are in heaven and on earth." Is it asked how this is to be reconciled with the endless consequences of sin, and the possible final destruction of any human being? To be able to answer the inquiry, would demand a knowledge of futurity I cannot claim. We see but parts of His ways; often but broken links in the infinite chain of the divine and all-wise counsel. I cannot reconcile, while I believe, the foreknowledge of God, and the moral freedom of man. I must needs bear with my ignorance of the will of Heaven, though that ignorance be sorrow. I must

yet say that firmly as I hold to the unalterable justice of God, and to the certainty of a retribution which shall render unto every man according to his deeds, amidst the darkness of my mind and the deep concern with which I must needs look upon the destiny of impenetrable and obdurate guilt, I have hope in God; I have confidence in his wisdom and love. What we know not now, I am assured we shall know hereafter. Now we see in part; then shall we know even as we are known.

I have thus presented, as plainly and fully as my limits allow, my leading views of Christian doctrine. I had designed to bring up other topics, and especially to explain more fully my views of the death and cross of Christ, to which I have only alluded. From what I have offered it will be seen that I regard the death of Christ, not as a satisfaction to God, but as designed to influence and affect man; to inspire faith, gratitude and love toward the Saviour; to impress us with the solemn claims of the gospel of truth and mercy, and to draw all men unto him. We deny not a crucified Saviour. We glory in the cross of Christ as the symbol of love divine — of faith triumphant over pain and ignominy and death. It is the pledge of pardon and peace and immortal hope.

Such, then, are my thoughts of Christian doctrine. I believe them to be, in the main, the views of my Unitarian brethren. They are views, let me add, which have passed the ordeal of experience; which good and holy men have adorned by their lives, and in which they have found unspeakable comfort and all-sustaining hope in death. They are the views in which the great minds of a Newton, a Locke and a Milton, found rest. They are the views which how many! unknown to fame, wise only in the

wisdom of their pure thought and humble purpose, have gathered as precious pearls from the mines of eternal wisdom and truth. I have myself stood at the bedside of the sick and dying, and seen their power. And when I have witnessed the uplifting hope, and peaceful resignation which they have imparted to the suffering bosom, often through long years of pain and trial, I could not doubt they were drawn from the crystal waters of life. Oh! that their purifying influence may be felt in the hearts of all who embrace and love them, inspiring watchfulness in temptation, forbearance under provocation, and faithfulness in duty.

Believing, as I do, that the sentiments I have here expressed are the truth of God, I cannot question their power; I have hope and unwavering confidence in their ultimate prevalence. The spirit of inquiry, so active about us, is nothing but auspicious to the interests of truth. Opposition, while it fain would stay, can only further its progress. Yet dearly as I love my own opinions, fondly as I cherish them, I cannot but remember that to others are their own as dear; nor can I fail to discover in every denomination pure and humble believers, who bear the image of Christ; and their faith, if founded on Christ and his word, I have no desire to distrub. However I may deem it erroneous in important particulars, however I may desire and pray it may be enlightened, if erroneous, were it in my power I would not uproot it. You have a tree in your garden planted in a soil which science and experience convince you to be not best adapted to it. But it grows and thrives and blossoms and brings forth rich and abundant fruit. Would you uproot that tree, retarding its growth, perhaps endangering its life, merely because you think a different soil and position better suited to it?

Neither would I dare uproot the smallest radicle of faith which is drawing nourishment from the one eternal fountain. No! God forbid that I should ever blight the humblest hope, or crush the feeblest spirit that strives to rise to Heaven. Rather let us bear with and enlighten our mutual ignorance, steadfast in the truth, and at the same time steadfast in our charity and love; remembering that other sheep hath Christ which are not of this fold; that God is no respecter of persons; but that in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

The Truth! sacred and responsible is the trust it imposes upon its possessor; most of all, when it is rejected of men — when it is cast out as evil. What occasions have we not had to enforce the solemn charge of fidelity — sometimes in sadness and grief, when assailed by harsh and uncharitable judgment; sometimes in gratitude and triumph, when we have beheld, as we have been permitted to behold, beautiful and illustrious examples of the power of the truth, in those its faithful servants, whose loss the church deplores. Oh! that we may be worthy of the doctrine we have embraced, and to which just and good men have set their seal, by a pure and generous zeal for its spread, by imbibing largely the spirit of Christ our master. Whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report, these let us seek and do. Above all, put on charity, the bond of perfectness — which shall abide when knowledge shall vanish — which is the grace that shall live in immortal glory when faith and hope shall be lost in sight and fruition.

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THE ATONEMENT.

By Rev. GEORGE W. BURNAP.

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THE ATONEMENT.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.

I am not unaware that the denomination to which we belong have been accused of denying the atonement. I am persuaded that this charge is founded on a misapprehension of our sentiments. We believe in the atonement. We believe in it precisely in the sense in which it is stated in that passage of Scripture I have just read to you, and which passage I believe to be the fullest and most explicit statement of the doctrine to be found in the Scriptures. The word atonement, I scarcely need remind you, is found in the New Testament but once, and there is used for a word in the original, which is every where else translated reconciliation. Had it been translated reconciliation there, as it ought to have been, much useless and unchristian controversy might have been saved. We

believe, that there was an intimate connection between the death of Christ and human salvation; we believe that he died for us, that he "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." We believe, according to the text, that "God was in" or through "Christ reconciling the world to himself," and that when Christ left the world, he committed the ministry of reconciliation to the apostles, and they to their successors, and that all faithful ministers are Christ's ambassadors, by all the means of persuasion beseeching men to be reconciled to God. Men, when in a state of sin, are at variance with God. And the death of Christ has had, and still has a powerful influence in bringing about an at-one-ment, making them at one or reconciled together.

We are wronged then, when it is said of us that we deny the atonement. We believe that the death of Christ has a powerful influence in bringing about a reconciliation between God and man. So do those who censure us. The only difference between us is as to the mode in which his death wrought this effect. Those who censure us say, that the death of Christ has an effect on God to reconcile him to us. We believe that the change must be wrought in us. We must repent, reform, and be conformed to his will, before we can be at one with him. We believe that the embassage of reconciliation came from God to man, offering terms of reconciliation, and that Christ was the ambassador. Conditions were offered through him to men, declaring what change must take place in their character and conduct, before God would be on terms of peace with them. The embassage was not sent by men to God to change him, and make him

favorable and ready to show mercy. He is as merciful as he can be by nature. There is no change needed in him. The Scriptures inform us of no impediment or hindrance to his mercy, except the impenitence and obduracy of mankind. Creeds and catechisms declare that Christ died to reconcile God to man. The Scriptures seem to us to teach that he died to reconcile man to God. So we are accused of denying the atonement, not because we do in fact deny it, but because we will not adopt the explanation which others, not more infallible than we, choose to put upon it. As well might we in our turn, accuse them of denying the atonement, because they will not adopt our explanation of it.

What then is the commonly received doctrine of the Atonement? It is thus stated in the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, "Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us." "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." The Westminster Confession thus expresses it, "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given him." Let us consider what is contained in these propositions.

In the first place, God was angry with men, and his anger was appeased by the sufferings and death of Christ. In the second place, that he suffered the full penalty for all the sins of all mankind; and thirdly, that he has purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheri-

tance in the kingdom of heaven for those whom God has given him. As a counterpart to this, his righteousness is imputed to us, as our guilt is to him; and his righteousness is the ground or reason of our acceptance with God, without respect to what we have done, either good or evil.

Now we say, that all these doctrines are essentially incredible, and we mean by incredible so entirely inconsistent with all we know of God, either from his works or his word, that we feel at once that such a system as this cannot make a part of his government. It does not agree with the facts of the case as stated in the Evangelical narrative. It does not agree with the general representations of the Scriptures.

In the first place, it does not agree with the facts of the case. Jesus came among the Jews in the character of their expected Messiah. He assumed the character of a divinely instructed teacher. He undertook to set up a new religion. His ministry is estimated to have continued about three years, most of which time he spent in instructing the multitudes which came to hear him. He chose twelve disciples, whom he more carefully taught the principles of his religion. He commanded men to repent and reform, and promised them on condition they did so, that their sins should be blotted out and forgiven. He said not one word of any impediment on the part of God. He said nothing of any act of his own, making the Deity more propitious to men than he otherwise would have been. He added moreover, what contradicts one part of this hypothesis, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." What is his whole sermon on the Mount, but one exhortation to practical righteousness? Now how

utterly superfluous this was, if this righteousness was to be of no advantage to them, and the whole ground of their acceptance with God was to be his own righteousness imputed to them? And he concludes his first and most important discourse with these remarkable words, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock." And what is the rock which he builds upon? The imputed righteousness of Christ? That is passed over in silence the most profound. The fact, he says, that he has done these commandments of Christ is the rock which storms and floods cannot wash away.

But did his preaching produce general repentance and reformation? It did not. And what was the reason? Because they did not believe. Here then we see the necessity and agency of faith in procuring reconciliation or atonement. They did not repent, because they did not believe that he brought them a command from God to repent. They did not believe him to be the Messiah as he claimed to be. That is, they rejected the ambassador whom God had sent. God was endeavoring through Christ to reconcile the world to himself, when by wicked works they were enemies to him. He offered them forgiveness simply on the terms of repentance and reformation. All that was wanting on their part was faith. The immediate disciples became convinced, with one exception, and were reconciled to God.

But the generality of the nation rejected him as their Messiah, and began to look upon him with hatred, and were determined to rid themselves of him and ruin his cause in the very inception. They therefore conspired

together by false charges to take away his life. He was tried, condemned and crucified near the walls of Jerusalem. But for what was he condemned? For adhering to the declaration that he was the Messiah. He was called before the council of the nation and solemnly interrogated by the high priest. "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ? And Jesus said, I am." Had he shrunk from that question and its consequences, there would have been an end of his religion and his mission. He died then a martyr to that one declaration, "I am the Christ," or Messiah. He sealed his mission, his embassy of repentance and reconciliation, with his blood. We have this most affecting transaction described to us by the Evangelists in the most vivid and moving colors. And as we see him led forth to execution, and suspended on the cross, is there any thing in it which would lead us to imagine that he, who hangs upon that cross, from the sixth hour to the ninth, bore all the punishment which was due to all the sins of all the millions of the human race from the foundation of the world till its close? Such is the graphic power of the Evangelists that you cannot but place yourself in that cloud of witnesses to the crucifixion, and would it ever enter your mind, that that barbarous and cruel murder could be considered in the light of an acceptable sacrifice to God? Could these wicked hands who crucified and slew the meek and sinless Jesus be offering up an acceptable sacrifice to the Father of infinite compassion? Could the Deity be more pleased with the race of mankind, when a portion of them had cruelly and unjustly put to death the most spotless being who had ever appeared on earth? These are speculations about which the

Apostles are profoundly silent, and are added to the scene by the imaginations of later ages. But while the Evangelic narrative is entirely silent as to these supposed effects of the death of Christ, it does state effects, which have been of unspeakable moment in the great office of the Redeemer, the reconciliation of the world to God. It drew upon him the intense and breathless gaze of that generation and all succeeding times. God did not need to be reconciled to man, — to be changed, appeased and satisfied. But there was need that sinful man should be changed, and brought into such a state as that the spontaneous mercy of God might be consistently extended to him. "And I," said he, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Myriads of hearts have been touched and melted to contrition, and thus reconciled to God by that affecting spectacle. These few hours of suffering then, though they produced no effect on the Deity to make him more ready to pardon mankind, for "God is love," did produce on mankind an immense, inestimable effect. The death of Christ was the mightiest agency ever brought to bear upon the human mind. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life." Lifted up upon the summit of Calvary, amid the multitudes of the Jewish nation assembled to keep the Passover, "a spectacle to angels and to men," his dying and convulsed lips which had preached so much, and preached so much in vain, addressed the world in more moving language than they had ever uttered before, "Be ye reconciled to God." So the Jewish malice, instead of destroying him and crushing his cause, fixed upon him the sympathies and the con-

fidence of millions of hearts. It put his character to the highest test, and by the manner in which he went through it, displayed him to the world in such a character of superhuman dignity, devotedness and benevolence, as to make an irresistible impression upon the human mind in that and every succeeding age. Who then does not perceive, that this tremendous exhibition was intended to produce an impression on men and not on God? There was no need of an impression upon God to make him more merciful, for the very mission of Christ originated in love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Now this was the very effect which his crucifixion had, to draw to him the attention and fix on him the belief of mankind, to lead them to accept the terms of repentance and reformation, which it had been the labor of his ministry to offer and urge upon them. Thus it was that the sufferings and death of Christ took away the sins of men, in the only way in which they can be removed, by producing faith, repentance and reformation. Thus Christ suffered and died on account of the sins of mankind, because men were sinners, and to take away their sins, but did not suffer their penalty. Had he suffered the full penalty of all the sins of all mankind, then they must in justice have been discharged, whether they repented or not, and all the sufferings inflicted on men in consequence of sin, is exacting the penalty twice, a proceeding which does not very well agree with those sentiments of justice which God has implanted within us.

Besides, the death of Christ operated in another way to produce faith, repentance, and remission of sin. The

manner of his death was public, witnessed by multitudes. It was officially procured and officially ascertained. His body was placed under a guard of soldiers, and watched in a sepulchre hewn out of solid rock. What circumstances could have been devised by divine wisdom to render the miracle of his resurrection more striking and convincing to the world? Thus it was, that the malice of the Jews prepared the way, in the most effectual manner, for God to place the grand seal of his authority on the mission of Christ, by raising him from the dead, in spite of all the powers of earth could do; and thus he "brought life and immortality to light" from the tomb, which since the creation had been a land of shadows, doubts and darkness. When, therefore, the angel came to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and thus open to man, to all future ages, an undying hope out of the very caverns of the grave, he found the way prepared, by all the attending circumstances of his death and burial, to spread the tidings far and wide, and call the nations from the death of sin to a life of holiness. Thus the malicious murder of Christ by the wise arrangement of Divine Providence, was made the most direct and efficacious means of promoting his cause, of reconciling the world to himself through Jesus Christ. These events did produce a sensation in the world which never was experienced before nor since, and which manifests itself in every page of the Acts of the Apostles. The accession of the Holy Spirit, or those miraculous powers which were bestowed upon the apostles, completed the evidence, and then men began to believe in great numbers, repented, reformed, "that they might not perish but have everlasting life." Thus, according to our text, God was in or

through Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their trespasses, and thus was committed to the apostles the ministry of reconciliation; and they went every where, beseeching men in Christ's stead "be ye reconciled to God." And what was in fact their preaching? Hear Peter in one of his first discourses after the ascension. "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out. Unto you first God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you" — how — not by pacifying the wrath of God, or suffering the penalty of sin, but "by turning away every one from his iniquities." What is the only condition upon which their sins should be blotted out? "Repent and be converted," or turned from your sins.

Such appears to us to be the plain, historic statement of the ministry, the sufferings, the death and resurrection of Jesus. These seem to us to be the real effects, which his death and the circumstances attending it actually had in the world and upon mankind. And we can have no doubt that these things were so arranged by infinite wisdom, in order to produce these effects. His death was a part of the great scheme of his mission to reconcile man to God. As it is simply and beautifully expressed by Paul; "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This agrees, as we conceive, with our views of the atonement; that it consists in reconciling man to God, and not in reconciling God to man; not in suffering the punishment due to men's sins, but in turning them away from their sins, and making them proper subjects of the mercy of God; not in purchasing God's mercy, for

that was infinite, free, and boundless before, or removing any impediment in him to its exercise, but in removing the only impediment, the impenitence of man.

Now let us consider the opposite doctrine. "Christ," say the Articles of the Church of England, "very God and very man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us." "The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." The Westminster Confession says, "The Lord Jesus Christ by his perfect obedience, and sacrifice of himself, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in heaven for all those whom the Father hath given him."

It is argued in support of this doctrine of atonement, that God is infinitely just, and his infinite justice requires a full penalty of every sin before it is forgiven. We answer then, if the debt is fully paid by another, it is not forgiven, so far as God is concerned. It is discharged. There is no forgiveness at all. If God has never forgiven a sin without exacting the full penalty, then he has never exercised an act of mercy in his administration of the universe. Can a usurer ever be said to forgive a debt, when he always compels either the debtor or some one else to pay the whole sum?

We reply moreover, that we know God is merciful, for he has declared it in his holy word from the foundation of the world. Hear his declaration to Moses. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."

Shall not we believe God's declaration concerning himself? Shall we believe that his mercy endureth forever, or shall we believe that this was uttered with some mental reservation, that he is merciful only when his mercy is purchased with a full equivalent of suffering? Mercy in its very nature is a relaxation of strict justice, is a remission of its exact awards. He who says God is just, in that sense of tenaciously exacting all, denies his mercy, a still more precious attribute of the Divine perfections. Besides, he denies the Scriptures, for they uniformly assert that God is merciful. But it is no imputation on his justice to say that he is merciful. Injustice is punishing the innocent, or punishing the guilty more than they deserve, or withholding a proper or a promised reward from the righteous or the meritorious. It would be unjust to exact the full amount of the penalty from the surety, and then cast the debtor into prison till he should pay over the whole amount himself. It would be unjust to exact, according to the creed, "a full satisfaction for all the sins of all mankind" from Christ, and then exact it again from them, by all the pains inflicted on sin in this world, and the world to come.

In the next place, it is urged that an infinite sacrifice was necessary for the honor of God's law; that forgiveness without a substitute would weaken its authority. But men must be careful that in honoring God's law, they do not dishonor him. To make this supposition, is to suppose that man was made for the law, and not the law made for man. This would suppose that the Divine government were like weak human governments, established merely to keep people in order, and not to consult their everlasting happiness. The honor of such a government

would be like the laws of Draco, written in blood, decreeing one and the same punishment, death, to the smallest and greatest offences. A government without mercy is what is called on earth, the government of a tyrant. Such an administration as that, while it honored the law would dishonor God. The government of God is strictly parental. Oh! how different it is from that stern, fierce and inexorable one, which this supposition would make it! "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." Oh! how different would such a God be from that Heavenly Father we have shown us by Christ in the parable of the prodigal son! There our Heavenly Father, under the character of the parent of the returning profligate, sees the sinner, while he is yet a great way off, and he "had compassion," spontaneous, not purchased, "and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." This was intended by Christ to shadow forth the Divine conduct towards sinners. But according to the hypothesis we are opposing, it is not according to the truth. To have been true to the fact, he should have made the father, before he would pardon and receive his son, have insisted that the other brother should first undergo all the punishment which the prodigal had deserved. On the contrary, you perceive, that he asks nothing more than true penitence and sincere reformation.

In the next place, this dogma of an infinite satisfaction is supported by the following argument. Every sin is an infinite evil, because it is committed against an infinite Being. It therefore requires an infinite satisfaction. Christ was the only Person who could make this satisfac-

tion, because he is God and man in one Person. But this argument is lame in two respects. In the first place, if every sin of a finite Being is infinite because committed *against* an infinite Being; on just as sound reason is the atonement infinite, because it is made *to* an infinite Being. If the act derive an infinite nature from the Being to whom it is done, instead of a finite nature from the agent, then the satisfaction will be infinite from the nature of the Being to whom it is rendered, though the agent who renders it be finite.

The other point in which this argument fails, is this. Christ made an infinite satisfaction by his sufferings and death, because he was an infinite Being, both God and man. But if you ask the advocates of this dogma, if they believe the Second Person of the Trinity, suffered and died, they answer, "No: it would be blasphemous to suppose so." Then it follows that nothing but the man suffered. What then becomes of the infinite satisfaction? It goes out in mere words. It is asserted in form, and denied in fact. The Divine Person must have been withdrawn all that time to the ruin of this argument, and the contradiction of creeds and articles of faith which assert that the two natures were joined in one Person never to be divided. Besides the Second Person, being equal in every respect in the Godhead with the first, the sins of mankind doubtless being committed against the whole Deity, were as much against him as the Father, and if the Father were angry and required satisfaction, the Second Person must be so too, and likewise require satisfaction. But he could not make satisfaction to himself, though he might to the Father and the Holy Ghost. It follows then irresistibly that the Second Person never has been, and

never can be satisfied. Such amazing inconsistencies men are led into by falling into the fundamental error, that the atonement is the reconciliation of God to man, instead of man to God.

But it is said, that the death of Christ was intended to make a display to the universe of the infinite evil of sin, and the wrath of God against it. It would have been making light of it, to have pardoned it on any other ground without making this exhibition. In answer to this I would say, that I can conceive of no possible way in which the evil of sin could be made to appear so light. The evil of sin is the happiness it prevents or destroys among mankind, the degradation and misery to which it subjects the sinner. These are its natural effects according to the laws of nature and God. Its appropriate punishment is remorse of conscience, and outward inconvenience and suffering. Its only cure, true penitence and thorough reformation. One of its evils and punishments is the slow, painful, and difficult process, the disagreeable and nauseous remedies to which we must submit, in order to be cured of this loathsome disease that we have brought upon ourselves. This, to my mind, displays the evil of sin more impressively than any thing else could do. And I will add, I know of no way in which this wide spreading evil of sin could be so diminished, I had almost said annihilated in my view, as to suppose that all this mighty connection between cause and effect, of sin and suffering could be arrested and broken off, and all the merited sufferings of the myriads of the human race could be concentrated and expiated by the sufferings of a few hours, by the agonies of one death. Sin is not so great an evil if all its ill consequences can be so easily got rid of. I

might have said, according to the theory we are opposing, the agonies and death of one human being, for it is not pretended, or rather it is strenuously denied, that the Divine Nature, the Second Person of the Trinity suffered. He must have been, if he were God equal to the Father, at that very moment filling all space in a state of infinite happiness and bliss. All connection of Jesus with him then, if there were any sympathy between them must have mitigated the sufferings of Jesus, instead of making them infinite. Besides, there were some circumstances in the death of Christ, though an exceeding painful and excruciating one, of alleviation, of comfort and support. "It was for the joy set before him that he endured the cross, despising the shame." Was there no consolation in the anticipation of this joy? He was not descending to a dark, a doubtful, or a fearful tomb. He knew that in three days, he should rise in glory, and ascend to that eternal joy which was set before him. His sufferings were not infinite in duration, nor could they have been in degree, because there was much to console him under them. To suppose then that these sufferings were equivalent to, and sufficient to cancel and do away, all the black crimes of all mankind in all ages, is to my mind to make light of sin, rather than impress the universe with its infinite evil and ill-desert. How much more impressive to witness in its endless manifestations, the inexorable law by which suffering is chained to sin in the sinner's own person, not to be broken, but by true contrition and real reformation.

Moreover, this whole hypothesis of satisfaction and substitution is founded on an entire misapprehension of the nature of sin and guilt, responsibility and punishment.

It supposes things, which are impossible in their own nature. It supposes sin, guilt, punishment, innocence and righteousness to be transferrable; that men's sins, guilt, and punishment were transferred to Christ, and his innocence and righteousness transferred to them. Sin is a personal act, and cannot be transferred, any more than personal identity can be transferred. It cannot by any possibility become the act of one, who never participated in it. Until one man can become another, he never can be guilty of his sins. That it cannot be transferred, is made certain by the very nature of conscience. That another suffers for my sin cannot relieve my conscience. It is rather aggravated than relieved by the fact. The only thing that can relieve me, is to suffer the penalty myself, or sincere repentance and reformation. Punishment is any kind of penalty, pain, or suffering inflicted on a transgressor. Punishment can take place only when there is a consciousness of guilt. If inflicted where there is no consciousness of guilt, it is not punishment. It is injury, or injustice. Vicarious punishment is a contradiction in terms. One man can suffer in consequence of another's sin. But this does not take it away; it rather aggravates it. One man may suffer for another that is a sinner, in order to reform and save him. One brother may undergo much for another brother in order to bring him to repentance, reformation, and reconciliation to their common father. But unless he brings him to repentance and reformation, it is all in vain. He cannot suffer in his stead, nor do any thing to expiate his guilt. Unless the guilty man repents and reforms, his conscience is not cleansed. He must suffer. He cannot enjoy peace or comfort.

Here then we come back to the ground from which we started. The sufferings and death of Christ are availing to take away the sins of men, only so far as they lead men to repentance and reformation. To this agrees this declaration of the apostle Peter: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." What can being redeemed by the blood of Christ from their vain conversation mean but being brought to repentance and reformation? There is no other deliverance from sin but by repentance and reformation. And we go further, and say, that without repentance and reformation, forgiveness can do little or no good. And here again we affirm that the theory of the atonement being the reconciliation of God to man, instead of man to God, utterly mistakes the nature of things.

Suppose a good father has a profligate son. He becomes alienated from his father, and wanders from his house. Some kind friend brings him home and tries to make a reconciliation or atonement between them. The father, in his great tenderness, forgives all that the son has done amiss. But the son is not sorry for what he has done. He has not reformed, but is as bad as ever. He is the same miserable, degraded, dissolute being as before. He is just as unhappy, and just as much the cause of unhappiness to his father. Of what use then is it to reconcile the father to him? Of no use whatever. The son must be reconciled to the father by repentance and reformation in order to have their reconciliation of any avail. The father was always ready to be reconciled whenever

he saw a true and real amendment in the son. The mutual friend, in order to have his interposition of any avail, must persuade the son to reform; then he will be in deed and in truth the minister of reconciliation. Here then we see from the very nature of things, that Christ did not die to reconcile God to men, but to reconcile men to God, and his interposition is available only so far and to so many as he brings to repentance.

But it is said, God could not and would not pardon men, even when they had repented and reformed, without inflicting their proper penalty and punishment on a substitute, or a third person. We answer, this is a mere assertion without a shadow of proof. He who says that might as well make any other assertion whatever. It is a libel on the character of God. What human parent was ever so inexorable and hardhearted as never to forgive one of his children when he asked his pardon with penitence and tears, until he had inflicted the full punishment on another of his children?

Besides, it is expressly contradicted by innumerable declarations of Scripture. "When he was a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you." "If thy brother sin against thee, and turn again and say, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." "How often," asks one of his disciples, "until seven times?" He answers, "Until seventy times seven." And shall God, who commands us to imitate him in his clemency and kindness, command us to forgive our brother until seventy times seven, on mere repentance and asking for-

giveness, and shall he not forgive us once? "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God for he will abundantly pardon." "Thou art a God," said Nehemiah, "ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." Are these the representations of a Being whose mercy must be purchased by the sufferings of an innocent person, or of one whose nature is all love and benevolence? And as to how far sacrifices propitiate his favor, hear the Psalmist. "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart thou wilt not despise." Do not say then that the mercy of such a Being must be purchased by what my soul abhors to name, a human sacrifice.

But it may be urged that Christ is said to have given himself a ransom for sinners. We believe it in the only sense which the assertion will bear. A literal ransom is given by one person to another for something received. In a literal ransom things change owners. But here there is no such transaction, no such parties. Christ was not given up to, and retained by any being or party in whose hands sinners were, and who then gave them up. It was not then a literal ransom. He was a ransom in the figurative sense of a deliverance, by laying down his life to redeem men from all iniquity. So God in Scripture is said to have ransomed the Israelites from Egypt, meaning not that he paid a price for them, but merely delivered them. So when he brought them back from the Babylonish captivity, Jeremiah declares, that "the Lord had redeemed Jacob and ransomed Israel."

The same observations are applicable to the phrase, "ye are bought with a price." There was no being whose property they were who could receive the price. The meaning is evidently the same as when it is elsewhere said that Christians "were redeemed from their vain conversation by the precious blood of Christ, that is, his death was a means of bringing them to repentance.

I have now finished the discussion, and I leave it with the candid judgments of all who hear me to say which of these views of the atonement is most agreeable to the nature of things, the eternal laws of personal responsibility, and the representations of the Scriptures, that which makes it to consist in reconciling God to men, in purchasing his favor, or that which makes it to consist in reconciling man to God by bringing him to repentance and reformation, and thus making him a fit subject for the divine clemency. As to the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and the common form of praying to be accepted through the merits of Christ, I merely ask you to examine your Bibles, and see if there be such a prayer or such a sentiment in them. And when you are satisfied that it is a human invention, I would have you turn to what is there. "He that hath done good shall rise to the resurrection of life, and he that hath done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

I have merely to add, that the doctrine of atonement or reconciliation is a practical doctrine, and one of immense importance to every one who hears me. It is not so much a matter of speculation as it is of feeling, of individual experience. You all know, every man may know, whether he is reconciled to God or not, whether he has sincerely repented and reformed, whether he has

peace with God and a conscience cleansed by true contrition, whether he is living a life of obedience or of recklessness and sin. If he is, he is in a state of atonement, he is at one with God. But if not, be assured there is no speculation, there is no imputed righteousness that will save you or give you rest. We then, as the ambassadors for Christ, as though God did through us beseech you, we entreat you, be ye reconciled to God.

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WHAT IS UNITARIANISM?

OR,

A STATEMENT OF THE VIEWS

OF THE

UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONALISTS OF THE UNITED STATES;

WITH SOME

HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL NOTICES OF THE DENOMINATION.

By ALVAN LAMSON, D.D.

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CONTENTS.

I. DOCTRINES OF UNITARIANS

Question often asked, what Unitarians believe — Their Faith misunderstood — Great distinguishing feature of Unitarianism — Diversity of opinion among Unitarians — Views generally received among them — Character of God — Gospel of Jesus originated in his mercy — Unitarian views of his justice — Jesus Christ — Unitarians believe him to be a distinct being from the Father — And inferior to Him — The sort of evidence on which they rely for proving this — Current language of the Bible — Their views of the teachings of the Scriptures relating to the Son — The inference they make from the conduct of the disciples and others — Their views of Trinitarian proof texts — The concessions of Trinitarian critics — Difficulties attending a belief of the Trinity — Its intrinsic incredibility — Unitarians do not address Christ directly in prayer — Reasons for not doing it — Question of his nature how regarded by Unitarians — His character and offices — True ground of reverence for Jesus according to Unitarians — Unitarian views of the Divinity of Christ — Their views of the Atonement — They do not, they contend, destroy the hope of the sinner, nor rob the cross of its power — Unitarian views of the Holy Spirit — of the terms of salvation — of the new birth — Retribution for sin and holiness — Of the Bible — Their reply to the charge of unduly exalting human reason — Reverence for human nature — Need of help — Evil of sin.

II. HISTORY.

Unitarians do not profess to hold any new doctrine — what they affirm they are able to prove of the Unitarianism of the ancient church — Reference to modern Unitarianism in Europe — American Unitarianism — Its date — Its progress to the commencement of the present century — Its state during the first fifteen years of this century — 1815 an epoch in its history — 1st controversy — Its origin and results — 2d controversy — First separation between Orthodox and Unitarian Congregationalists.

III. STATISTICS.

Number of societies and churches — Other Unitarians besides Congregationalists — Unitarian periodicals — American Unitarian Association — Present condition and prospects of Unitarianism.

Concluding Remarks — Unitarian views of exclusiveness — Diversity of opinion — The Martyr spirit — Living out the truths of Religion.

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WHAT IS UNITARIANISM?

It is often asked, in these days of inquiry, and the frequent change and commingling of opinions, what Unitarianism is. What do Unitarian Christians believe? What are their views of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Atonement, of the Holy Spirit, of the Bible, of the new birth, of religion generally?

My purpose, at present, is to reply to these questions; and I shall proceed therefore briefly to state what Unitarian Christianity is; — to state, as far as it can be done within the compass of a few pages, what Unitarians believe of God, of the Savior, of his Cross, of Regeneration, of Sin and Holiness, of the Bible, of Human Nature, and Human Reason. I shall subjoin a few remarks on the History and Statistics of Unitarianism, especially in this country.

The reader will understand me. I am not going to enter into any argument in defence of Unitarianism. I am not going to be controversial. I am not about to discuss the question who are right, Unitarians, or Trinitarians, but simply to state what Unitarian Christians believe, and the grounds of that belief, so far only as is ne-

cessary to the right understanding of it. In other words, I would explain what Unitarianism is, and on what sort of evidence its friends rely for proving its truth.

Something of this kind, it is believed, is called for by the many misapprehensions which exist on the subject. The faith of Unitarians is often misunderstood and misrepresented; I may be permitted to say, calumniated. It is often denounced in the pulpit, and from the press, and in private and social meetings. People are warned against it as a soul-destroying error. There is a portion of the community which has a strong prejudice against it, without knowing precisely what it is, or why they should be afraid of it. Only they are told, that they must have nothing to do with it; they must not hear its preachers, nor read the books of the denomination.

Now to such, could my voice reach them, I would say, in the language which was once used, when the question was asked, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" — "Come and see." Come and see what Unitarianism is. Understand before you judge; then receive or reject it. If it appear to be the truth of God, — if it appear to embrace the simple truths of the Gospel, — then do not hesitate to acknowledge it as such. Do not be frightened by a name; do not allow yourselves to be influenced by what men say; fear God rather than man. Reverence the truth wherever you find it. Come and see what Unitarianism is, before you allow yourselves to cry out against it. Do not condemn it unheard. Do not allow yourselves to form your opinion of it from the imperfect and distorted representations of its enemies. This is what I would say, could my voice reach those who denounce it.

But besides these, there are many probably in all our

congregations, — especially among the younger portion of the community, who have grown up since the late controversies, — who have no very well-defined idea of what Unitarian Christianity is, and who would like to hear a brief exposition of it. This, as I said, I propose now to give. I shall state the views of American Unitarians, known as such. With the opinions of foreign Unitarians, I have, at present, nothing to do. Nor shall I speak of other sects, as the "Christians," or *Chrystians*, as they were formerly called; a portion of the Friends, or Quakers; and the Reformed Baptists, numerous in the West, who together with the great body of the Universalists, hold anti-trinitarian opinions, but who are not known by the name of Unitarians. I shall speak only of the denomination known by the name of Unitarian Congregationalists of the United States.

Unitarianism takes its name from its distinguishing tenet, the strict personal unity of God, which Unitarians hold in opposition to the doctrine which teaches that God exists in three persons. Unitarians maintain that God is one mind, one person, one individual being; that the Father alone is entitled to be called God in the highest sense; that He alone possesses the attribute of Infinite, underived Divinity, and is the only proper object of supreme worship and love. They believe that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from Him, and possesses only derived attributes; that he is not the supreme God himself, but his Son, and the medium through which he has chosen to impart the richest blessings of his love to a sinning world.

This may be called the great leading doctrine, the distinguishing, and, properly speaking, the only distinguish-

ing feature of Unitarianism. Unitarians hold the supremacy of the Father, and the inferior and derived nature of the Son. This is their sole discriminating article of faith.

On several other points they differ more or less among themselves. Professing little reverence for human creeds, having no common standard but the Bible, and allowing in the fullest extent freedom of thought and the liberty of every Christian to interpret the records of divine Revelation for himself, they look for diversity of opinion as the necessary result. They see not how this is to be avoided without a violation of the grand Protestant principle of individual faith and liberty. They claim to be thorough and consistent Protestants.

There are certain general views, however, in which they are mostly agreed, which they regard as flowing from the great discriminating article of faith above-named, or intimately connected with it, or which they feel compelled to adopt on a diligent examination of the sacred volume. Of the more important of these views, as they are commonly received by Unitarian Congregationalists of the United States, I may be expected to give some account, though I feel that it will be impossible, without exceeding due limits, to do any thing like justice to the subject.

I begin with the character of God. Unitarians, as I said, hold His strict personal unity. They are accustomed, too, to dwell with peculiar emphasis on his moral perfections, his equity, his holiness, and especially his paternal love and mercy. They regard it as one of the chief glories of Christianity that it contains a clear assertion and full illustration of the doctrine that God is our Father. They give to this doctrine a prominence in their teachings, as one peculiarly dear to their hearts, one intimately

interwoven with their conceptions of a true, cheerful, and elevating piety, and the obligations and encouragements to repentance, prayer, and an obedient life. It is the office of religion, as they view it, to purify the soul of man, to enkindle in it holy desires and affections, and become to it a source of light, strength, comfort, peace; and the paternal character of God, his infinite love, tenderness, pity, united with the holiness of his nature, is the great idea which must lie at the foundation of all such religion in the soul.

They believe that the mercy of God is not confined to a few arbitrarily chosen out of the great mass of beings equally sinful in his sight; but that he yearns with a father's tenderness and pity towards the whole offspring of Adam. They believe that he earnestly desires their repentance and holiness; that his infinite overflowing love led him miraculously to raise up and send Jesus to be their spiritual deliverer, to purify their souls from sin, to restore them to communion with himself, and fit them for pardon and everlasting life in his presence; in a word, to reconcile man to God and earth to heaven.

They believe that the Gospel of Jesus thus originated in the exhaustless and unbought love of the Father; that it is intended to operate on man, and not on God; that the only obstacle which exists, or which ever has existed on the part of God, to the forgiveness of the sinner, is found in the heart of the sinner himself; that the life, teachings, sufferings, and resurrection of Jesus become an instrument of pardon, as they are the appointed means of turning man from sin to holiness, of breathing into his soul new moral and spiritual life, and elevating it to a union with the Father. They believe that the cross of

Christ was not needed to render God merciful; that Jesus suffered, not as a victim of God's wrath, or to satisfy his justice. They think that this view obscures the glory of the divine character, is repugnant to God's equity, veils his loveliest attributes, and is injurious to a spirit of filial, trusting piety. Thus all, in their view, is to be referred primarily to the boundless and unpurchased love of the Father, whose wisdom chose this method of bringing man within reach of his pardoning mercy, by redeeming him from the power of sin, and establishing in his heart his kingdom of righteousness and peace.

I now proceed to speak of Jesus Christ. As before said, Unitarians believe him to be a distinct being from God and subordinate to him. The following may serve as a specimen of the processes of thought, views, and impressions through which they arrive at this conclusion. I state them, it will be observed, not by way of argument. I shall use no more of argument, I repeat, than is necessary to explain fully what Unitarianism is, and how it sustains itself, — in other words, on what foundation it professes to rest.

Unitarians do not rely exclusively, or chiefly, on what they conceive to be the intrinsic incredibility of the doctrine to which they stand opposed. They take the Bible in their hands, as they say, and sitting down to read it, as plain, unlettered Christians, and with prayer for divine illumination, they find that the general tenor of its language either distinctly asserts, or necessarily implies the supremacy of the Father, and teaches the inferior and derived nature of the Son. In proof of this they appeal to such passages as the following: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus

Christ whom thou hast sent:" John xvii. 3. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus:" 1 Tim. ii. 5. "My Father is greater than I:" John xiv. 28. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me:" John vii. 16. "I speak not of myself:" John xiv. 10. "I can of mine own self do nothing:" John v. 30. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works:" John xiv. 10. "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ:" Acts ii. 36. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour:" Acts v. 31.

They appeal to such passages, and generally to all those in which Jesus Christ is called, not God himself, but the Son of God; in which he is spoken of as sent, and the Father as sending, appointing him a kingdom, "giving" him authority, giving him to be head over all things to the church. Such passages, they contend, show derived power and authority.

Again, when the Son is represented as praying to the Father, and the Father as hearing and granting his prayer, how, ask they, can the plain, serious reader resist the conviction that he who prays is a different being from him to whom he prays? Does a being pray to himself?

Unitarians urge that passages like those above referred to, occurring promiscuously, are fair specimens of the language in which Jesus is spoken of in the New Testament; that such is the common language of the Bible, and that it is wholly irreconcilable with the idea that Jesus was regarded by those with whom he lived and conversed, as the Infinite and Supreme God, or that the Bible was meant to teach any such doctrine. They do not find,

they say, that the deportment of the disciples and of the multitude towards Jesus, the questions they asked him, and the character of their intercourse with him, indicated any such belief on their part, or any suspicion that he was the Infinite Jehovah. We meet, say they, with no marks of the surprise and astonishment which they must have expressed on being first made acquainted with the doctrine, — on being first told that he who stood before them, who ate and drank with them, who slept and waked, who was capable of fatigue and sensible to pain, was, in truth, the Infinite and Immutable One, the Preserver and Governor of nature.

They contend that the passages generally adduced to prove the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, fail of their object; that without violence they will receive a different construction; that such construction is often absolutely required by the language itself, or the connection in which it stands; that most of those passages, carefully examined, far from disproving, clearly show the distinct nature and inferiority of the Son. They notice the fact as a remarkable one, that of all the proof texts of the Trinity, as they are called, there is not one on which eminent Trinitarian critics have not put a Unitarian construction, and thus they say that Unitarianism may be proved from the concessions of Trinitarians themselves. It is certainly a very extraordinary fact, that there is not a single text of Scripture commonly adduced as proving the Trinity, which distinguished Trinitarian critics have not abandoned to the Unitarians.

Unitarians find difficulties of another sort in the way of believing in a tri-personal Deity. They object, the inherent incredibility of the doctrine in itself considered. They

say, that they cannot receive the doctrine, because in asserting that there are three persons in the Deity, it teaches, according to any conception they can form of the subject, that there are three beings, three minds, three conscious agents, and thus it makes three Gods, and to assert that these three are one, is a manifest contradiction.

So too with regard to the Saviour, — to affirm that the same being is both finite and infinite, man and God, they say, appears to them to be a contradiction and an absurdity. If Jesus Christ possessed two natures, two wills, two minds, a finite and an infinite, they maintain that he must be two persons, two beings.

Unitarian Christians of the present day, so far as I know, do not think it lawful directly to address Christ in prayer. They think that his own example, the direction he gave to his disciples, — "when ye pray, say, Our Father," — and such expressions as the following: "In that day," that is, when I am withdrawn from you into heaven, "ye shall ask me nothing; verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you," not only authorize, but absolutely require prayer to be addressed directly to the Father. To prove that the ancient Christians were accustomed thus to address their prayers, they allege the authority of Origen, who lived in the former part of the third century, was eminent for piety and talents, and in learning surpassed all the Christians of his day. "If we understand what prayer is," says Origen, "it will appear that it is never to be offered to any originated being, not to Christ himself, but only to the God and Father of all; to whom our Saviour himself prayed and taught us to pray."

In regard to his metaphysical nature and rank, and the

time at which his existence commenced, Unitarians undoubtedly differ in opinion. Some hold his pre-existence, and others suppose that his existence commenced at the time of his entrance into the world. The question of his nature they do not consider as important. Some take this view. They think that the testimony of the apostles, the original witnesses, to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of him, bears only on his birth, miracles, teachings, life, death, resurrection and ascension, that is, on his character and offices, and that beyond these we need not go; that these are all which it is important that we should know or believe, that the rest is speculation, hypothesis, with which, as practical Christians, we have no concern; that neither our comfort, our hope, nor our security of pardon and eternal life depend upon our knowledge or belief of it.

At the same time, all entertain exalted views of his character and offices. In a reverence for these, they profess to yield to no class of Christians. The divinity which others ascribe to his person they think may with more propriety be referred to these. "We believe firmly," says one of the most eminent writers of the sect, "in the divinity of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with divine authority, and was a bright image of the divine perfections. We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated to him his spirit without measure. We believe that Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression, and representative of God to mankind, so that in seeing and knowing him, we see and know the invisible Father; so that when Christ came, God visited the world and dwelt with men more conspicuously than at any

former period. In Christ's words we hear God speaking; in his miracles, we behold God acting; in his character and life, we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love. We believe, then, in the divinity of Christ, as this term is often and properly used."

Unitarians do not think that they thus detract from the true glory of the Son. They regard him as one with God in affection, will, and purpose. This union, they think, is explained by the words of the Savior himself. "Be ye also one," says he to his disciples, "even as I and my Father are one"; one not in nature, but in purpose, affection, and act. Through him Christians are brought near to the Father, and their hearts are penetrated with divine love. By union with him as the true vine, they are nurtured in the spiritual life. In his teachings they find revelations of holy truth. They ascribe peculiar power and significance to his cross. To that emblem of self-sacrificing love, they turn with emotions which language is too poor to express.

The cross is connected in the minds of Christians with the Atonement. On this subject Unitarians feel constrained to differ from some of their fellow Christians. They do not reject the Atonement in what they conceive to be the scriptural meaning of the term. While, however, they gratefully acknowledge the mediation of Christ, and believe that through the channel of his gospel are conveyed to them the most precious blessings of a Father's mercy, they object strongly to the views frequently expressed, of the connection of the death of Christ with the forgiveness of sin. They do not believe that the sufferings of Christ were penal — designed to satisfy a principle of stern justice, for justice, say they, does not inflict

suffering on the innocent that the guilty may go free. And besides, they believe that God's justice is in perfect harmony with his mercy, that to separate them, even in thought, is greatly to dishonor him. They believe that however the cross stands connected with the forgiveness of sin, that connection, as before said, is to be explained by the effects wrought on man and not on God.

They believe that in thus teaching they do not rob the cross of its power, nor take away from the sinner ground of hope. To the objection, that sin requires an infinite atonement, and that none but an infinite being can make that atonement, they reply by saying, that they find in their Bibles not one word of this infinite atonement, and besides, that no act of a finite being, a frail, sinning child of dust, can possess a character of infinity, or merit an infinite punishment, that it is an abuse of language so to speak; and further, that if an infinite sufferer were necessary to make due atonement for sin, no such atonement could ever be made, for infinite cannot suffer; that God is unchangeable, and it is both absurd and impious to ascribe suffering to him; God cannot die; and admitting Jesus to have been God as well as man, only his human nature suffered; that there was no infinite sufferer in the case; that thus the theory of the infinite atonement proves a fallacy, and the whole fabric falls to the ground. Still is not the sinner left without hope, because he leans on the original and unchanging love and compassion of the Father, to whom as the primary fountain we trace back all gospel means and influences, and who is ever ready to pardon those, who through Christ and his cross are brought to repentance for sin and holiness of heart and life.

Further, the Unitarian replies, that whatever mysterious efficacy the cross of Christ may be supposed to possess, beyond its natural power to affect the heart, it must owe that efficacy wholly to the divine appointment, and thus the nature and rank of the instrument become of no importance, since the omnipotence of God can endow the weakest instrument with power to produce any effect he designs to accomplish by it. They quote Bishop Watson, a Trinitarian writer, as saying that "all depends on the appointment of God"; that it will not do for us to question the propriety of any "means his goodness has appointed, merely because we cannot see how it is fitted to attain the end"; that neither the Arian nor the Humanitarian hypothesis necessarily preclude "atonement by the death of Jesus." — *(Charge delivered in* 1795.*)*

By the Holy Spirit, Unitarians suppose is meant not a person, but an influence, and hence it is spoken of as "poured out," "given," and we hear of the "anointing" with the holy spirit, phrases which, they contend, preclude the idea of a person. It was given miraculously to the first disciples, and gently as the gathering dews of evening distils upon the hearts of the followers of Jesus in all ages, helping their infirmity, ministering to their renewal, and ever strengthening and comforting them. It is given in answer to prayer. As Christ said, "If ye being evil," imperfect beings, "know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him:" Luke xi. 13.

Unitarians believe that salvation through the gospel is offered to all, on such terms as all, by God's help, which he will never withhold from any who earnestly strive to

know and do his will, and lead a pure, humble, and benevolent life, have power to accept. They reject the doctrine of native total depravity, but they assert that man is born weak and in possession of appetites and propensities, by the abuse of which all become actual sinners, and they believe in the necessity of what is figuratively expressed by the "new birth," that is, the becoming spiritual and holy, being led by that spirit of truth and love which Jesus came to introduce into the souls of his followers. This change is significantly called the coming of the kingdom of heaven in the heart, without which, as they teach, the pardon of sin, were it possible, would confer no happiness, and the songs of paradise would fall with harsh dissonance on the ear.

While they earnestly inculcate the necessity of a holy heart and a pure and benevolent life, they deny that man is to be saved by his own merit, or works, except as a condition to which the mercy of God has been pleased to annex the gift of everlasting life and felicity.

Unitarian Congregationalists believe firmly in a future retribution for sin and holiness. They think the language of the scriptures on this subject too plain to be misunderstood. This language, they believe, teaches as explicitly as language can, that suffering for sin does not cease with the present life, — that the sinner who leaves the world impenitent is subjected to the fearful judgments of conscience and of God in a future, unexplored state of being. They think that the teachings of the Bible on this subject are in harmony with all that is at present known of the capacities and affections of the soul, and the laws of its spiritual nature. However impossible they may find it to reconcile the doctrine of endless torment, inflicted for the sins of this frail and finite life, with their conceptions of

God's infinite paternal compassion and love, — compelled, as they are, to reject this doctrine, as unworthy of God, and unauthorized by scripture representations and metaphors, they believe that right views of the declarations of the Savior, and of the nature of sin and holiness as habits of the soul, afford no hope of future impunity to the impure and sinful spirit. They believe that the language of the Bible relating to the future condition of the wicked, of those who go out of life with souls stained by the pollution of sin, and burdened with depraved affections, have a meaning, a significance, ay, a terrible significance. They believe that the consequences of present character and conduct will be felt through every stage of an endless existence. But on a subject necessarily so obscure, involving the meaning of the highly figurative expressions and bold oriental imagery found in the records of Divine Revelation, they are unwilling to dogmatize, or attempt to be more precise than the Scriptures. While, therefore, they hold tenaciously the doctrine of a future momentous retribution for sin, they would leave each one to adopt those views of the circumstances and manner of this retribution which appear to him most accordant with truth or probability.

There is nothing peculiar in the sentiments which Unitarians, as a body, entertain of the Bible, which distinguishes them from other sects. They go to it as the fountain of inspired truth. They regard the several books which compose the volume, as the records of a Divine Revelation. They make it their standard, their rule of faith and life, interpreting it as they think consistency and the principles of a sound and approved criticism require. In proof of their veneration for the scriptures they appeal

to the fact that several of the best defences of Christianity against the attacks of infidels, have come from the hands of Unitarians, — a fact which no one acquainted with the theological literature of modern times, from the Reformation down to the present day, will call in question.

They make use of the common, or King James's version, as it is called, but like all well informed Christians, they think that a reverence for truth and a desire to ascertain the will of God justify and require them, whenever there is any doubt about the meaning, to appeal to the original, or to compare other versions. In doing this, they say, they do not fear that they shall be condemned by any intelligent Christian. There is no greater slander than that which is frequently propagated from pulpits, in the streets, and from house to house, that they have "another Bible," as it is expressed. This slander often originates in ignorance, but is sometimes countenanced, if not uttered, by those who know, or should know better. May God forgive them this wrong.

Unitarians have been accused of unduly exalting human reason. To this they reply, that the Bible is addressed to us as reasonable beings; that reverence for its records, and respect for the natures which God has bestowed on us, make it our duty to use our understandings and the best lights which are afforded us, for ascertaining its meaning; that God cannot contradict in one way what he reveals in another: that his word and works must utter a consistent language; that if the Bible be his gift, it cannot be at war with nature and human reason; that if we discard reason in its interpretation there is no absurdity we may not deduce from it; that we cannot do it greater dishonor than to admit that it will not stand the

scrutiny of reason: that if our faculties are not worthy of trust, if they are so distempered by the fall that we can no longer repose any confidence in their veracity, then revelation itself cannot benefit us, for we have no means left of judging of its evidences or import, and are reduced at once to a state of utter skepticism.

Unitarians sometimes speak of reverence for human nature, — of reverence for the soul. They reverence it as God's work, formed for undying growth and improvement. They believe that it possesses powers capable of receiving the highest truths. They believe that God, in various ways, makes revelations of truth and duty to the human soul; that in various ways he quickens it; kindles in it holy thoughts and aspirations, and inspires it by his life-giving presence. They believe that however darkened and degraded, it is capable of being regenerated, renewed, by the means and influences which he provides. They believe that it is not so darkened by the fall but that some good, some power, some capacity of spiritual life, is left in it. But they acknowledge that it has need of help; that it has need to be breathed upon by the divine spirit. They believe that there is nothing in their peculiar mode of viewing Christianity which encourages presumption; encourages pride and self-exaltation. They believe that the heart which knows itself will be ever humble. They feel that they must perpetually look to God for aid. They teach the necessity of prayer, and a diligent use of the means of devout culture. They do not then teach reverence for human nature in any such sense, they urge, as would countenance the idea that man is sufficient to save himself without God. They pray to Him for illumination: pray that he will more and more communicate of himself

to their souls.—They teach the blighting consequences of sin. They believe that in the universe which God has formed, this is the only essential and lasting evil, and that to rescue the human soul from its power, to win it back to the love of God, of truth and right, and to obedience to a principle of enlarged benevolence, which embraces every fellow being as a brother, is the noblest work which religion can achieve, and worth all the blood and tears which were poured out by Jesus in the days of his humiliation.

Such, omitting minor differences, are the leading views of the Unitarian Congregationalists of the United States. They do not claim to hold all these views as peculiar to themselves. Several of them they share in common with other classes of Christians, or with individuals of other denominations.

Unitarianism has a history. Its friends do not profess to hold any new doctrine. They speak of its antiquity and revival. They profess to be able to trace it back to the days of the Apostles. They claim the primitive church as wholly with them. They affirm that the Jews before the time of the Savior were strictly Unitarian, as they still remain; that it is a fact, as well ascertained as any historical fact can be, that the Jewish Christians of the early ages were so also; that it was originally no heresy to believe that the miraculous conception alone stamped on the nature and person of Jesus a character of divinity, or that he was born like other men. They contend that all the Fathers for more than three hundred years after the commencement of the Christian era, never fail of ascribing supremacy to the Father, and held the strict and proper inferiority of the Son; that they made him a

distinct being from the Father, though many of them assigned him from all eternity a sort of metaphysical, or potential existence in the Father as an attribute, that is, his wisdom or reason, which attribute took a separate personal existence a little before the creation of the world, and became an agent of the Father in its formation. In this they differed from the Jewish Christians, as also from the Arians, who taught that he was created out of nothing. Unitarians affirm that the germ of the doctrine of the Trinity is first traced in the learned Platonising converts, who brought it with them from the schools of human philosophy; they say that its origin is thus, in their view, satisfactorily explained; they contend that it was of gradual formation, and that they can trace its growth from age to age, till it assumed something like its present form about the middle of the fifth century. These views they think have been fully established in modern writings, both in this country and in England.

They trace back modern Unitarianism to the early days of the Reformation under Luther. Several of his contemporaries embraced it. The learned Servetus, a Spanish physician, was burned for asserting and defending it, in Geneva, in 1553, Calvin having been active in procuring his punishment, and afterwards boasting of it as an act of merit.

About the same time a Society of Unitarians in Italy were broken up and dispersed by the Inquisition. A retreat was afterwards opened to them in Poland. They had a college at Racow, numbering at one time more than a thousand students from different parts of Europe; they had churches in all parts of the kingdom, and their sentiments were embraced by many of the chief nobility.

There they flourished many years, and left behind them many monuments of their learning and zeal. They were banished from the kingdom by the hatred and intrigues of the Roman Catholics in 1660. "They submitted to the painful condition of being separated forever from their native land." Many thousand individuals of both sexes and all ages, "yielding to their hard destiny, took a final leave of their country, and wandered with uncertain steps, friendless and destitute, to seek an asylum in some foreign clime." Many "bent their steps towards Prussia, Silesia, and Moravia; others emigrated to Holland and the Low Countries," some went to Transylvania, where they still exist as a distinct body, and some passed over to England. There, as elsewhere, Unitarians underwent severe persecution for their opinions, and several of them sealed their faith with their blood. But the doctrine was not suppressed, and English Unitarianism numbers a long line of learned and good men, the ornaments of their age and of humanity. Among them we find the names of Emlyn, Whiston, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Lardner, Price, Priestley, Lindsey, Aikin, Jebb, Rees, and many others, besides the three greater lights, Locke, Newton, and the poet Milton. Unitarian sentiments are now extensively diffused among the Presbyterians of England and in the North of Ireland, and Unitarian houses of worship exist in different places in Scotland. The Report of the American Unitarian Association made in May, 1842, states the number of Unitarian congregations in England at about 300; in Ireland, at 39; in Scotland, at 12.

American Unitarianism dates back, at least, to the middle of the last century. In a letter to Dr. Morse, dated May 15th, 1815, the elder President Adams says,

in reply to a statement that Unitarianism was then only thirty years old in New England, "I can testify as a witness to its old age" He goes back sixty-five years, and names some clergymen, and among others Dr. Mayhew, of Boston, and Gay, of Hingham, who were Unitarians. "Among the laity," he adds, "how many could I name, lawyers, physicians, tradesmen, farmers!" There was, however, little open avowal of Unitarianism at this period, nor until after the American Revolution; nor were there many congregations professedly Unitarian until after the commencement of the present century, though as early as 1756, Emlyn's Inquiry into the Scripture Account of Jesus Christ was re-published in Boston, and extensively read.

In 1785, the Society worshipping at King's Chapel, Boston, adopted an amended liturgy, from which Trinitarian sentiments were excluded. Between that period and the end of the century, Unitarian sentiments manifested themselves to a small extent in Maine, and Mr. Bentley openly preached them in Salem, Massachusetts. The same sentiments were preached in the southern parts of the State, in Plymouth and Barnstable Counties, in which there were many Unitarians. In the western part of Massachusetts, in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, Unitarianism had made little progress. Out of New England few if any traces of it were visible, except at Northumberland and Philadelphia, where Dr. Priestley had made some converts.

Thus closed the 18th century. But though, as before remarked, there was at this time but little open profession of Unitarianism, the general tone of thinking and feeling in Boston and the vicinity was decidedly Unitarian, or, at least, the current was strongly setting that way.

During the first fifteen years of the present century, controversy on the subject was seldom or never introduced into the pulpit, but Unitarianism was making silent progress. Many having ceased to hear the opposite sentiments inculcated, embraced it, often without any distinct consciousness of the fact. The term Unitarianism was then seldom heard in New England, those since called Unitarians being then denominated Liberal Christians. The appointment of one of them to the Divinity Professorship at Cambridge, in 1805, was the occasion of a sharp controversy.

The year 1815 formed an epoch in the history of American Unitarianism. The circumstances were briefly these. Mr. Belsham, in his memoirs of Lindsey, published in London, in 1812, had introduced a chapter on American Unitarianism, or as it was expressed, on the "Progress and present State of the Unitarian Churches in America." This was re-published in Boston, in 1815, with a Preface by the American editor, the object of the re-publication being to sound the alarm against Unitarianism on this side of the Atlantic. The pamphlet was immediately reviewed in the Panoplist, an Orthodox publication of the day. The two publications caused great excitement. The Panoplist especially was complained of by the Unitarians, as greatly misrepresenting their sentiments, and containing many injurious aspersions on their character.

A controversy ensued, Dr. Channing leading the way, in a letter addressed to the Rev. S. C. Thacher, in which he charges the Panoplist with the attempt to fasten on the Unitarians of this country all the odium of Mr. Belsham's peculiar views, and replies to what he conceived to be other misrepresentations of the reviewer, particularly to

the accusation of hypocritical concealment brought against the Unitarians. Several pamphlets were written in this controversy by Dr. Channing, Dr. Samuel Worcester of Salem, and some others, mostly in 1815.

The tendency of this controversy was to draw a sharp and distinct line between the parties. The Panoplist had urged on the Orthodox the necessity of a separation "in worship and communion from Unitarians." From that time the exchange of pulpits between clergymen of the orthodox and liberal denominations in a great measure ceased, though all were not prepared for this decided step. Many congregations were much divided in opinion; a separation was viewed by many as a great evil; many were strongly opposed to it, but it now became inevitable.

The Unitarian controversy, strictly so called, brought up the question of the rights of churches and parishes respectively in the settlement of a minister. Before the excitement on this subject had subsided, another controversy arose, occasioned by Dr. Channing's sermon, preached at Baltimore, at the ordination of Mr. Sparks. This controversy embraced the doctrine of the trinity, and the doctrines of Calvinism generally, all of which were subjected to a very thorough discussion. Professor Stuart of Andover appeared in defence of the Trinity; and Mr. Andrews Norton in opposition to it, in an article in the Christian Examiner, subsequently enlarged and published in a separate volume under the title, "A Statement of Reasons for not believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians, concerning the Nature of God, and the Person of Christ." Dr. Woods of Andover defended the doctrines of Calvinism, and Dr. Ware, of Harvard University, replied. There were several replications and rejoinders on both sides.

A discussion was at the same time going on between Mr. Sparks of Baltimore, and Dr. Miller of Princeton.

By the time this controversy subsided, the Orthodox and Unitarian Congregationalists were found to constitute two distinct bodies. The ministers of both divisions, however, in Massachusetts, still annually meet in convention as Congregationalists, a name which belongs equally to both, but have elsewhere little religious fellowship or communion.

Such is the origin and history, so far as they can be given here, of the American Unitarians, viewed as constituting a distinct class or denomination of Christians. They are mostly the descendants of the old Congregationalists of New-England, and are still Congregationalists. They are attached to the Congregational polity and forms of worship, for what they regard as their Scriptural simplicity, as well as from many ancestral associations.

It is difficult to estimate the number of Unitarians in the United States; and of their character for intelligence, piety, and benevolence, it does not become us to speak. When they have no separate place of worship, they continue in many instances united in worship with Orthodox societies. From the fifteenth Report of the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association, (May, 1840,) it appears that the number of religious societies and churches professedly Unitarian in Massachusetts was then one hundred and fifty; in Maine, fifteen; in New-Hampshire, nineteen; in the other States about forty. The number has since increased, and is now estimated in all at about three hundred. These are Congregational Unitarians. A recent document assigns to the denomination called *Christians*, (who are also Unitarians,) two thousand preachers and licentiates, fifteen hundred

churches, three hundred and twenty-five thousand communicants, and five hundred thousand worshippers. The other sects alluded to at the beginning of this tract as holding anti-trinitarian sentiments, are also large, and some of them rapidly increasing in different parts of the country, but the precise number of worshippers embraced in them it is not easy to ascertain.

Among the periodicals, which utter Unitarian sentiments at the present time, are the Christian Register, a weekly paper, commenced in Boston, in 1822; the Christian World, Boston, also a weekly paper, commenced in January, 1843. The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters, a monthly publication, in Boston, begun in 1829, has been recently united with the Christian Examiner. This latter was originally issued under the name of the Christian Disciple, a monthly publication, commenced at Boston in 1813, under the superintendence of the late Dr. Noah Worcester. It continued under his charge until 1819, when a new series was commenced under different editors. This series terminated with the fifth volume at the end of 1823. The work then took the name of the Christian Examiner and Theological Review, and afterwards the Christian Examiner and General Review, and since the union just alluded to, the Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany, a number being issued every two months, the thirty-seventh volume being now in the course of publication. The Monthly Religious Magazine was commenced in Boston, in January, 1844. Besides these, there are several other magazines or journals in different parts of the country, which advocate Unitarian sentiments.*

* The above mentioned periodicals, and some others not enumerated are still continued. Among the Unitarian religious periodicals

The American Unitarian Association was formed in Boston, in 1825. An extensive correspondence is carried on, and other business transacted by the General Secretary of the Association, and the number of auxiliaries in different parts of the United States is now about one hundred and fifty. The Association holds its annual meeting at Boston, in May of each year, at which the Report of the Secretary is read, after which various topics are discussed in speeches or addresses. The Association, through its Executive Committee, issues tracts monthly, of which the seventeenth volume is now in the course of publication. It furnishes temporary aid to small and destitute societies, and does something for domestic missions, particularly in the Western States. There is also a Book and Pamphlet Society, not under the control of the Association, but which co-operates, in some measure with it, and distributes a large number of books and tracts.

The last Annual Report of the Association, speaks of the condition and prospects of the denomination as in a high degree encouraging. Societies are multiplying in various parts of the country, and Unitarian teachers now meet with acceptance, where a few years ago they would have found none to listen to them. If the spirit of active controversy in the sect is passing away, as some think, the importance of a living practical faith, and an earnest

of former years, omitting several others, we may name the General Repository and Review, (by Mr. Andrews Norton,) a work of great merit and learning, begun in 1812, and extending to four volumes; the Unitarian Miscellany, begun at Baltimore, (by Mr. Sparks,) in 1821, and extending to six volumes; and the Unitarian Advocate begun at Boston, in 1828, (by Mr. E. Q. Sewall,) and extending to ten volumes.

piety, was never more deeply felt. Efforts have recently been made, and not wholly in vain, to raise funds to meet the wants of the denomination, especially to educate young men for the ministry, to assist destitute societies, and support missionaries; in different ways to promote the cause of spiritual Christianity, and aid in building up the kingdom of the Redeemer in the world.

I have spoken of what Unitarians believe. One word of the strength of my own convictions. For myself, I must say that having studied the subject for more than a quarter of a century, I should just as soon think of denying that there is a sun in the heavens, as of denying that the Scriptures teach the supremacy of the Father, and the distinct and derived nature of the Son. I do not hesitate to express confidently, my entire and undoubting belief of the strict personal unity of God. So strong are my convictions on this subject, that I should as soon doubt of the existence of God as of his proper personal unity. I do not feel more certain of my own existence than of the truth of this leading doctrine of Unitarianism. There is no fact of my own consciousness which I hold with a firmer grasp.

But while I say this, I must add, that our faith teaches us not to condemn as not entitled to the Christian name, and not in a condition to be saved, those who hold opinions different from our own. We do not so read our Bibles. A faith free from speculative error is not the highest good of the Christian. The great question with us is, or should be, what is our faith doing for the world, for the cause of humanity, of pure, undefiled, practical religion, and what effects is it working in our own hearts

and lives? Does it produce in us a spirit of warm piety, and earnest and enlarged benevolence?

Unitarian Christians are accustomed, among the traits of the Christian character, to assign a high place to a spirit of all-embracing love. They profess to dislike denunciation and exclusiveness. They believe them foreign from the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus. They do not learn of him to denounce their fellow Christians. They are not blind to the many excellencies of those who differ from them in their interpretation of the words of Christ. They do not think that all merit is walled up within a particular church or sect. This has been the great error of Christians. They have been too often narrow and sectarian. They have contended that there could be no salvation without the limited pale of their own sect. Unitarian Christians profess not so to have learned Christ. They believe that there is one universal church, comprehending the pure and humble of all sects, and holding in its embrace all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and walk according to his precepts, however they may differ in faith and opinion. It folds in its bosom Catholic and Protestant, Trinitarian and Unitarian.

They cannot conceive how uniformity can be expected in religion, when the works of God exhibit an endless variety. Does not nature proceed from God as well as religion; and does not nature exhibit infinite diversity and contrasts, yet over all breathes a spirit of beauty and love? And why not the same in religion, — the human soul? Is it to be believed that God limits his favor and the help of his good spirit to those who belong to a particular church, or worship by a particular creed, or use a certain style of invocation, or receive the rites of religion through

a particular channel? Is not such a supposition derogatory to the character of the ever loving Father? How strangely sound denunciation, and the language of exclusiveness from lips accustomed to utter the name of Jesus of Nazareth! Where the soul is free, there must of necessity be diversity of opinion in religion. If you would have entire uniformity of opinion, you must fetter the soul's freedom. You must repress the loftiest exercise of its powers. You may "make a solitude and call it peace," but do you thus honor God or religion?

The portion of the church to which we belong, as I have said, has had its martyrs, who have gone cheerfully to the stake, and done no discredit to their faith. They have borne patiently the spoiling of their goods, imprisonment, exile, and death. Their names, as were the names of the first Christians, and of the Reformed under Luther, have been branded with opprobrium, and their books have been burned. Yet their deep convictions of truth have sustained and animated them, and they have died with the testimony of their love to the Saviour on their lips, and we doubt not have received a heavenly crown.

We are called to bear testimony in a different way, but in a way no less effectual. It is by a pure, humble, holy and benevolent life. It is by living out the practical truths we receive, especially as taught in that grand summary of human duty, the Sermon on the Mount. How divine the spirit which breathes in that discourse! Love, purity of heart, humility, obedience, the living out the truth that God is our Father, and every human being our brother, — these are what it teaches, as necessary to save us. Thus to live is to build on a rock. Not one word of creeds, not one word of doctrines, forms, and rites, as

possessing in themselves power to save the soul, not one word of all these, — but how much of justice, mercy, and love, — of denying the selfish passions, and the putting away of selfishness from the life. These we must do. The spirit which breathes in Jesus's discourses, must breathe in our hearts and lives. The Father will then come to us, and dwell with us, and our heaven will be here begun. Even so come, Father Almighty, dwell in our hearts now, and fit us for a more full manifestation of thyself to our spirits in a higher world.

1st Series. No. 203.

THE

NINETEENTH REPORT

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE ANNUAL MEETING,

MAY 28, 1844.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

JUNE, 1844.

Price 6 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER,
SCHOOL STREET.

NINETEENTH ANNIVERSARY.

The Nineteenth Anniversary of the American Unitarian Association was celebrated on Tuesday evening, May 28th, 1844. The meeting for business was in the Berry Street Vestry, at seven o'clock, Hon. Joseph Story in the chair.

The Treasurer presented a Statement of Receipts and Expenditures, which was accepted.

Statement of Receipts and Expenditures of the American Unitarian Association, from May 30, 1843, to May 28, 1844.

RECEIPTS.

Balance in the Treasury, May 30th, 1843, as per account then rendered, ...		$1361 40
From Auxiliary Associations and Subscriptions, .	2730 46	
" Donations, ...	261 50	
" Life Members, ...	457 00	
" Sales of Tracts, ...	204 07	
" Societies and Individuals for Western Missions, ...	199 00	
" Societies and Individuals for the relief of Churches needing aid, ...	3183 37	

From Domestic Missionary Fund, being the amount appropriated by the Executive Board, exclusive of $3020, subscribed to the A. U. A. received through them,	$1088 23		
" American Unitarian Association, Interest of the Permanent Fund, ...	700 00		
			8823 63
			$10,185 03

EXPENDITURES.

For Paper, and Printing and Binding Tracts and Books for distribution, . . .	$1160 35		
" Salary of the General Secretary one year, .	1800 00		
" Travelling Expenses of do., ...	100 00		
" Rent of Office, Tract Agency, &c. . .	200 00		
" Incidental Expenses, ...	161 65		
" Aid of Unitarian Society in Montreal,* . .	800 00		
" " " " Burlington, W.T.	50 00		
" " " " Hillsboro', Ill. .	200 00		
" " " " Chicago, " .	150 00		
" " " " Quincy, " .	100 00		
" " " " Vernon, N. Y. .	100 00		
" " " " Albany,* " .	975 00		
" " " " Southington, Ct.*	150 00		
" " " " Windsor, Vt. .	50 00		
" " " " Manchester, N.H.*	250 00		
" " " " Hampton Falls and Kensington, "	50 00		
" " " " Topsham, Me.* .	100 00		
" " " " Calais, " .	50 00		
" " " " Greenfield, Ms., .	100 00		
" " " " Cabotville,* " .	250 00		
" " " " East Lexington, "	100 00		
" " " " Chelsea, " .	100 00		
			6997 00

*The payments and appropriations marked thus (*) have been made, wholly or in part, from funds specially designated by the Donors to be applied to those places.

Paid Rev. A. H. Conant, for Missionary Services in Illinois,	110 00	
" " J. Walworth, for Missionary Services in Illinois,	200 00	
" " T. J. Griffiths, for Missionary Services in Ohio,	100 00	
" " Benj. Parsons, for Missionary Services in the Western States,	40 00	
" " Barzillai Frost, for Missionary Services in the Western States,	70 00	
" " C. T. Brooks, for Missionary Services in Mobile,	150 00	
" " H. Lord, for Missionary Services in Montreal,	15 00	
" " F. W. Holland, for Missionary Services in New York,	10 00	
" " J. P. B. Storer, " " "	100 00	
" " Mr. Van Tassell, " " "	40 00	
" " J. Bartlett, " " "	10 00	
" " S. J. May, " " "	20 00	
" " F. D. Huntington, " " "	10 00	
" " G. W. Hosmer, " " "	20 00	
" " A. P. Peabody, for Missionary Services in Vermont,	10 00	
" " W. D. Wiswall, for Missionary Services in Vermont,	10 00	
" " Matthew Harding, for Missionary Services in Maine,	50 00	
		$965 00
		7962 00
Balance on hand,		2223 03
		$10,185 03

Er. Ex.

HENRY P. FAIRBANKS, *Treasurer.*

Boston, May 28th, 1844.

The following sums have been appropriated by the Executive Committee, but not yet drawn from the Treasury, viz. :

For Aid of Unitarian Society in		Southington, Ct. .	100 00
"	"	Augusta, Me. .	75 00
"	"	Saco, Me. .	50 00
"	"	Standish, Me. .	75 00
"	"	Manchester, N.H.	100 00
"	"	Windsor, Vt. .	50 00
"	"	Lincoln, Mass. .	50 00
"	"	Sudbury, " .	50 00
"	"	Dennis, " .	50 00
"	"	South Natick, " .	100 00
"	"	East Lexington, "	50 00
"	"	Cabotville, Mass.*	266 00
"	"	Albany, N. Y. .	200 00
"	"	Syracuse,* " .	167 00
"	"	Rockford, Ill.* .	233 37
"	"	Chicago, " .	75 00
"	"	Geneva,* " .	250 00
"	"	Milwaukee, W.T.*	167 00
To Rev. John Walworth, for Missionary Services in Illinois, ...			100 00
For Missionary Services in Towns on Connecticut River, ...			100 00
For Aid of Theological Education in the West, .			100 00
			$2408 37

Boston, June 4, 1844. The undersigned have examined the above accounts, and find the same to be correctly cast and properly vouched.

Thomas Tarbell,
Henry Loring, } *Auditors.*

The following officers for the ensuing year were then chosen.

OFFICERS
OF THE
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.
1844—45.

PRESIDENT.

Hon. Joseph Story, LL. D., Mass.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon. Joseph Lyman, Mass.
" Charles H. Atherton, N. H.
" Stephen Longfellow, Me.
Henry Wheaton, Esq., N. Y.
James Taylor, Esq., Penn.
Henry Payson, Esq., Md.
Hon. William Cranch, D. C.
" Samuel S. Wilde, Mass.
" Samuel Hoar, "
" Richard Sullivan, "
" Lemuel H. Arnold, R. I.
H. J. Huidekoper, Esq., Penn.
Hon. Daniel A. White, Mass.
" John Fairfield, Me.
" James M. Wayne, Ga.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Rev. Artemas B. Muzzey,
" George E. Ellis,
" Nathaniel Hall,
} *Directors.*
" Charles Briggs, *General Secretary.*
" Samuel K. Lothrop, *Assistant Secretary.*
Henry P. Fairbanks, Esq., *Treasurer.*

The following gentlemen were chosen COUNCILLORS of the Association.

Francis Alger, Esq.
William T. Andrews, Esq.
R. W. Bailey, Esq.
Isaiah Bangs, Esq.
N. A. Barrett, Esq.
Rev. Samuel Barrett,
Rev. Andrew Bigelow,
William Brigham, Esq.
E. Cobb, Esq.
C. K. Dillaway, Esq.
Hon. S. Fairbanks,
Rev. F. A. Farley,
Hon. Albert Fearing,
Dr. J. F. Flagg,
C. Francis, D. D.
Rev. Ezra S. Gannett,
S. Greele, Esq.
Rev. James D. Green,
Rev. E. B. Hall,
Rev. Alonzo Hill,
James Kendall, D. D.
Alvan Lamson, D. D.
John Lamson, Esq.
Peter Mackintosh, Esq.
Samuel May, Esq.
Rev. Henry A. Miles,
Rev. J. H. Morrison,
Geo. R. Noyes, D. D.
Rev. Samuel Osgood,
John Owen, Esq.
Francis Parkman, D. D.
Rev. Ephraim Peabody,
Hon. Jonathan Phillips,
Hon. Stephen C. Phillips,
Rev. J. Pierpont,
John Prentiss, Esq.
L. G. Pray, Esq.
Wm. Pomroy, Esq.
Rev. George Putnam,
Henry Rice, Esq.
Rev. C. Robbins,
John G. Rogers, Esq.
Henry B. Rogers, Esq.
Benjamin Seaver, Esq.
W. R. Sumner, Esq.
Rev. C. Stetson,
Hon. R. Sullivan,
Robert G. Shaw, Esq.
Rev. Moses G. Thomas,
Rev. J. W. Thompson,
James Walker, D. D.
Rev. Jason Whitman,
Hon. Sidney Willard,
Rev. A. Young.

An amendment to the 5th Article of the Constitution, requiring five instead of three Directors, two of whom shall be Laymen, was offered by Rev. Mr. Farley, of Brooklyn, N. Y.

A Resolution was offered by Rev. Mr. May, of Leicester, referring to the course pursued by a Society at the South in relation to one of the Missionaries of the Association; the subject having been introduced at the last annual meeting, but no action having been taken upon it. Owing, however, to the lateness of the hour, it was voted to hold an adjourned meeting for its consideration on the following afternoon.

The public exercises of the occasion were attended, at half past seven o'clock, in the Federal Street Church. After prayers, by Rev. E. B. Hall of Providence, the Report of the Executive Committee was read by the General Secretary.

NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee are happy to meet again the members and friends of this Association, and to present to them the Nineteenth Annual Report.

We do this with increased confidence in the truth and importance of those views of Christianity which we are laboring to disseminate, and with a stronger hope of

their success, and final triumph. And we present this, too, with a deeper sense of the obligations we are under to extend more widely the blessings of the Gospel, and do more for the salvation of men. Every year makes us more intimately acquainted with the condition and wants of the denomination, and opens a wider field of duty and usefulness.

We would acknowledge the good providence of God in all that we have been able to do the past year, for the moral improvement of our fellow beings, — for the church, for truth, and holiness. We have, indeed, done more to promote the great objects of the Association than in any previous year. And yet we have had frequent cause of regret, that our means would allow us to do no more, — that many important parts of the vineyard must be neglected, — and spiritual darkness suffered to brood over some of the fairest portions of the country.

Our modes of operation have been similar to those of past years.

The demand for our monthly publications has greatly increased. Besides supplying the associations connected with us with about sixty thousand, we have had calls for an unusual number from different parts of the country, and from England. We propose, occasionally, to publish some tracts of a cheaper kind, and of a more practical character.

Eighteen associations, auxiliary to this, have been formed and reorganized during the year. And nineteen individuals have become members for life, of the parent Association. They are the following: Miss Margaret Newman, Roxbury; Wm. C. Shaw, Esq., Baltimore; James Fowler, Esq., Westfield; Rev. Seth Chandler, Shirley;

Rev. Richard Pike, Dorchester; Rev. Henry Lambert, East Cambridge; Mrs. Elizabeth Manning, Cambridge; Mrs. Elizabeth Gould, Ashby; Rev. William P. Lunt, Quincy; Rev. J. T. Sargent, Boston; Rev. John Weiss, Watertown; Rev. Geo. W. Burnap, Baltimore; Moses Everett, Esq., Boston; Rev. Joseph Osgood, Cohasset; Rev. Joseph H. Allen, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury; J. R. Appleton, Esq., Dublin, N. H.; Mrs. Mary Clapp, and Miss Catharine Clapp, Dorchester; Ann B. Holbrook, Sterling. The whole number of members of the Association is between five and six thousand; of whom upwards of four hundred are members for life.

There are still a large number of societies, some long established, and others recently formed, which cannot support the institutions of religion without some temporary assistance. Several of our new societies require aid either in erecting their churches, or in supporting their ministers for the few first years.

Many of these are peculiarly situated, and should by all means be sustained. We have made appropriations to twenty-four, in the following places: Saco, Standish, Topsham, Augusta and Calais, Me; Hampton Falls and Manchester, N. H.; Windsor, Vt.; Cabotville, Greenfield, East Lexington, Chelsea, South Natick, Dennis, Lincoln and Sudbury, Mass.; Southington, Ct.; Albany and Vernon, N. Y.; Montreal; Hillsboro', Chicago, and Quincy, Ill.; and Burlington, Wisconsin Territory. Several of these societies are in very important places, and their members are making great efforts and sacrifices to sustain them. The most important are at Albany and Montreal. We feel a deep interest in those, who, amidst strong prejudices, and under many trials and discourage-

ments, are laboring to build up the truth of Christ, to erect churches in which they can worship the Father according to the dictates of their consciences, and more profitably than in other churches. But we feel, if possible, a deeper interest in those, who are comparatively destitute of the means of religion, — who are far away from the good institutions and hallowed places of their earlier years, — who have no church, no preacher, no Sabbath school, — we had almost said no Sabbath; and but little to remind them that they are in a Christian country.

We have, therefore, attached great importance to missionary labors; and have done what we could through our missionaries to meet the wants of such.

We have employed, the past year, in different parts of the country, and for longer and shorter periods, seventeen missionaries.

A correspondent in Illinois, Mr. Fuller, thus describes a meeting which he and one of our missionaries conducted: "Upon the evening of the first day, we were made welcome to the cabin of a worthy Christian brother. It was deemed advisable to hold a meeting; and though no previous notice had been given, and the population was scattered, the news of our arrival soon assembled thirty persons. So rarely do many of our friends in these sparse settlements hear the Gospel, that no little satisfaction attends the arrival of one willing to preach. Indeed, there are many inquiring, free spirits, who long for religion, pure and undefiled, who will not listen to those fettered with a creed, or preaching Calvinistic dogmas; men who are longing to hear our views, and ready to embrace our reasonable faith. Several were there, who remarked that

for *six years* they had attended *no religious meeting whatever;* who, weary of mysteries and the errors of professed friends of Jesus, had almost been tempted to believe there was no reality in religious hope. I am firmly of the opinion, that nothing so surely saves men from infidelity as the hearing and reading of the truths we hold. Here, in this humble log cabin, were gathered men, anxious to hear of Christ, and learn the way of salvation."

We have employed Rev. Mr. Griffiths, of Wales, as a missionary at Palmyra and Parisville, Ohio. He preaches one half of the time in the Welch language, to a society of his own countrymen, and the other half in English to a society of Americans and Englishmen.

We have encouraging accounts of the labors of Rev. Mr. Adams, a preacher of the Christian denomination, whom we have employed as a missionary in Wisconsin Territory. His services have been very acceptable to a society at Burlington, composed of Eastern Unitarians. Rev. Mr. Conant of Geneva, Ill., is still one of our most devoted and successful missionaries. After returning from a long and fatiguing missionary tour, he speaks of the great satisfaction he derived from seeing his instructions so well received, and the doctrines he taught so highly prized. "I preached, he says, on my way, and distributed tracts, — sowed the good seed in some places heretofore unvisited by any minister of our faith. The interest which I sometimes see manifested by persons who hear our views of truth for the first time, is enough to reward me for a great deal of physical and spiritual toil."

Rev. Mr. Walworth, of the Christian denomination, has been employed by us as a travelling missionary, in Northern Illinois and Wisconsin. "During my labors

and travels, he writes, I have circulated a large number of tracts and books; and find them of great service in removing prejudice and spreading our views among the people." "I find our views peculiarly adapted to the spiritual wants of the people here. With them I have approached the thoughtless, the indifferent, and the skeptical. And by the blessing of God they proved a savor of life unto life. The wanderer has returned, the skeptical have acknowledged their faith in Christ, and the indifferent have inquired what they should do to be saved. I have beheld a growing faith in these views bringing hope and consolation to the despairing and dying." "I am sure it would be gratifying to our Eastern friends, he adds, to witness the improvement that has been made in some individuals, families, and neighborhoods, through the labors bestowed on them by the beneficence of the American Unitarian Association. And permit me through you, to present the thanks of many kind and pious hearts, in the Valley of the Rock River, to the Association. Long will its kindness be remembered with gratitude; and many prayers will go up for blessings and success upon its pious and benevolent exertions. There are many souls here hungering and thirsting for the word of life. And it is to us they look. Shall they look in vain? I have received as many as four letters in a week from the distance of from twenty-five to one hundred miles, saying, come over and help us."

To meet the growing wants of our churches, and particularly those in the West, it is important that more young men should be educated for the ministry. A Western theological school has been in contemplation for several years. It is believed by many that preachers

educated at such an institution, would be better adapted to the West. And it gives us pleasure to state, that efforts are now being made by H. J. Huidekoper, Esq., and Mr. Frederick Huidekoper, to establish a similar school at Meadville, in Western Pennsylvania; and that the names of from fifteen to twenty students have already been received. Great credit is due to those gentlemen for such a disinterested and truly Christian undertaking. We anticipate much good from it to the churches in the West; especially as it will afford the means of an improved Theological education to the preachers of that large and increasing denomination, the Christians, who are substantially with us in faith and spirit.

There has been an encouraging growth the past year in many of our societies; and a number of new ones have risen up in different parts of the country. Several might easily be gathered in Maine; and a travelling missionary is much wanted in different parts of that state. The society at Windsor, Vt., has been revived; and has now a permanent ministry. And the society at Manchester, N. H., may be considered among the established societies. Preachers are wanted in several places in Massachusetts; particularly on the Connecticut River. And two have recently been sent for by societies which have heretofore had clergymen of other denominations. The societies in this city are doing more than formerly for missionary and other objects connected with the church. The two societies in Providence, R. I., besides supporting a ministry to the poor, are doing a good deal for the mariner's church; and the members of Rev. Mr. Hall's church are about employing a missionary to preach in various parts of that state. The new society at South-

ington, Ct., has erected a commodious church, and proposes soon to settle a minister. And at Hartford an effort will be made to build a church in the course of the year. Besides the growth of our societies in the city of New York, the society at Brooklyn has greatly increased, and has recently erected one of the most beautiful churches in the United States. The society at Albany has been prospered; and, with the aid it will doubtless receive in paying for its church, may be regarded as permanently established. The societies in Vernon, Trenton, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo, are in a prosperous condition. There are many Christians of our faith in western New York; and it is very important that a missionary should be sent there. The society at Montreal is provided with an able and devoted pastor, and is making great efforts to erect a house of worship. As this is the first Unitarian society in Canada, and promises to exert a wide influence there, it deserves the encouragement it has received here and in other parts of the country. Of the societies in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and in the Southern States we hear favorable accounts. Their condition is improving; and they are generally regarded with more favor by other denominations. We feel a deep interest in the society at Washington. From its situation it is one of the most important in the denomination. Its members are entitled to great credit for the sacrifices they have made to sustain it; and they deserve our sympathy and aid. Our societies in the Western States are mostly in a flourishing condition. New ones are springing up there every year. And among the places where preachers are particularly wanted, are Cleveland, Ohio; Rockford, and Warsaw, Illinois; Burlington, Iowa Territory; and Munroe, Wisconsin Territory.

There is much in the condition and prospects of the denomination that is encouraging, and that calls for increased efforts in the cause of truth and holiness. There is, we believe, a steady and healthy growth of our views in this country and in Europe. And may we not hope that there is a corresponding religious growth? — that our faith is exerting its practical influences upon our hearts and lives? Besides other proofs which might be named, the spirit manifested at our public meetings, particularly at our conventions in Providence and Brooklyn, gives evidence of a deeper interest in religion, both among the clergy and laity.

We have received no letters the past year from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association; but the Rev. Mr. Muzzey, our delegate at its last annual meeting, gives us favorable accounts of its operations and prospects. We deeply sympathize with the members of that Association, and with all our transatlantic brethren, under their peculiar trials and privations; and earnestly pray that their oppressions may cease, and a brighter day dawn upon them.

The Receipts of the Association, according to the Treasurer's Report, including the amount on hand at the commencement of the year, are $10,185.3, and the expenditures and appropriations, $10,370.37.

The result of the Missionary movement, as will be seen by a statement presented to this meeting, is highly gratifying. We anticipate much good to the churches from efforts like this — to the churches that give as well as those that receive.

We hope, for the cause of religion, that a better spirit is prevailing among the different denominations of Chris-

tians than formerly; — and that we among the rest are regarded with more favor by those who differ from us. And yet it often gives us pain to hear of the prejudices that still exist against us. We are sometimes denied the Christian name, and Christian privileges.* When, alas!

* We shall be excused if we make a few brief quotations, which tell of the humiliating fact. Rev. Mr. Edgar, a Doctor of Divinity and Theological Professor, at a large meeting in Belfast, Ireland, a few months since, was loudly applauded through a long speech against Unitarians. A single quotation will show us how we were regarded by that applauding assembly. "Who is there that needs doubt now, when the experiment has been fairly tried, that Unitarianism is only another name for infidelity, — the negation of truth, the absence of religion, the extinguisher of piety, the cold, deep, dark grave of Christianity! We regret, bitterly, that there are a few individuals of fine *natural* feelings, and kind *natural* dispositions, who are still unhappily associated with that soul-destroying heresy; and let us entreat and beseech them, for God's sake, and the sake of their own souls to come out from it, and be saved."

From a pulpit in one of the towns in Connecticut, where we have a new society, language like this is sometimes heard: "Unitarians are as rank infidels as Tom Paine. They spurn the Bible. They have been recently laboring to inculcate the principles of Voltaire and Gibbon; and there is not a man among them who is not at heart hostile to all true religion, virtue, and holiness."

In one of the religious papers of this city, are the following remarks: "For ourselves we can have but little more hope of the eternal salvation of Unitarians, who understand that system and yet adhere to it, than we have of that of the heathen. Indeed, we think the guilt of the former to be immeasurably greater than that of the latter. Our strongest desire is, that both Unitarians and the heathen may be sanctified through that atoning blood, which the former knowingly, and the latter ignorantly reject."

In an almanac published at Montreal, the Unitarian society of that city is left out of the list of the different denominations of Christians, and put in a separate column with the Jews.

will it again be said of Christians, as it was in the primitive days of our faith, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" But we will hope that, in the coming ages of the church, the true test of discipleship will be more remembered and insisted on, and the spirit of Jesus more prevalent among his professed followers. We will do what we can, by precept and example, to hasten that period. We will strive so to live, as to show our faith by our works — show by our charity, by our lives and conversation that we have claims to that name, which is so dear to us — the name of Christian. Our faith is, indeed, precious. It is to us the truth of Christ — what God has spoken by him — the faith, and the only faith that can meet the deep wants of our souls, and bring comfort, and hope, and joy to our bosoms. And we will proclaim it — we will contend for it — we will live by it — we will die by it — and if need be, I trust, die *for* it. And if we truly live by it, it will be to us all a savor of life unto life.

The sentiments expressed in a letter of Rev. Dr. Nichols, our late and much respected President, on resigning his office, (the duties of which he feels unable to perform,) are so good and so much in accordance with our own views and feelings, that we do not hesitate to quote them. "I beg leave to say, that this resignation will not prevent me from attending the anniversary as often as may be in my power, and from doing what little I can, in common with my brethren, for our great and good cause. More great and good it has never appeared to me than it does at the present moment; nor ever, I believe, has its spirit rested with so true and deep a power in the hearts of its ministers in general, as now. Every thing is giving us to understand, that a revolution has

taken place which will be satisfied with nothing short of a liberal and generous religion, and one that shall speak with truthfulness and power to the common sensibilities of our nature. The dogmatist and the formalist are less and less capable every hour of filling the office of the evangelist. Public curiosity tires and is disgusted, almost as soon as excited, over any theological dispute, in which such men endeavor to supersede the plain and distinct impressions of the understanding. I see no proof that the community are discarding a reverence for religion; only it must be the religion of common sense, disinterestedness, benevolence, and practical piety. May the articulate voice of this religion speak out with increasing boldness and kindness from every Unitarian pulpit. The honest and intelligent men of humble ranks, and of all ranks, are more and more calling us, in the providence of God, 'to come over to Macedonia and help them,' — to give them a rational instead of a bewildered religion, — to speak to their souls, of which there is such wide and mournful need, — and to bless their spiritual being with a living and practical faith. I hope that in the powerful fellowship of such a faith our brethren and friends may come together on the approaching venerable and pleasant season of our Anniversary; — and that from many springs there may gush up the proofs of a moral force, rich in the best sensibilities, and the most overflowing convictions of the reality and solemnity of the truths in which we believe."*

We cannot close without referring to the frequent instances of mortality which have occurred the past year

* At the business meeting thanks were voted to Rev. Dr. Nichols, for his faithful and efficient services as President of the Association.

among our clerical brethren. We look in vain for the faces of several, who were with us on the last anniversary; whom we valued and loved. Since the commencement of 1843, but little more than a year, eleven clergymen have, in the Providence of God, been called from their earthly labors.* We have not time to speak of them as we could wish. But we feel constrained to refer particularly to one who was among the earliest and truest friends of this Association, who, for ten years, was one of its most efficient officers, and did much to promote its best interests. The name of Ware is dear to us all — is dear to this community, and to all our churches; which he greatly blessed in his life, and now blesses, and will long bless by the pious influence of his writings and the holy light of his example.

Rev. S. K. Lothrop, in behalf of the Executive Committee, presented the following Resolutions for discussion during the evening:

Resolved, — That the agitations and strifes that divide and subdivide the various religious sects, that maintain an extra Scriptural authority in matters of faith, whether said authority be supposed to reside in human creeds, or hierarchies, and the evil consequences resulting therefrom, exalt and assure those great Protestant principles, by which Luther was justified, and through which he tri-

* Rev. Messrs. Swett, Simpkins, Whitney, Wells, Damon, Greenwood, Ware, Cotton, Sayward, Allen and Storer.

umphed; which Robinson commended to the Fathers of New England, to which we claim to be faithful, but from which, all these other sects seem, in our judgment, more or less widely to depart.

Resolved, — That in our recent missionary efforts, we recognise the practical operation of Gospel principles and affections; and that in the success of these efforts, we find encouragement to renewed exertions to fulfil our part in the execution of that great command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which permits us not to cease from our labors to diffuse the Gospel, till it is preached to every creature; and upon these exertions, we devoutly supplicate the Divine blessing.

Resolved, — That we are gratified to learn, that notwithstanding intolerance and injustice have subjected our brethren in Great Britain and Ireland to severe trials, in which we sincerely sympathize, Unitarian sentiments are yet making gradual, healthful and steady progress in those countries, as also in France, Holland, and in Switzerland; and that we regard this fact as uniting with much other evidence to prove that all the obstacles resulting from religious prejudices, from ecclesiastical and political powers, though they may retard, can not wholly prevent the growing prevalence of those pure and simple Gospel trûths which we hold — truths which we may hope, through the influence of a liberal, intellectual Christian culture, to see more generally diffused.

Resolved, — That we bow submissive to those appointments of an all-wise Providence, whereby an unusual number of our clergy, highly honored and beloved, have been removed during the past year, from the scene of their earthly labors, to their heavenly reward; and while we

tenderly sympathise with their bereaved families and flocks, we cherish their memories as a rich legacy of holy influences — incentives to gratitude and fidelity.

Rev. Mr. Thompson, of Salem, arose and addressed the meeting.

He said, — That the doctrine of "the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith" had been alluded to by the President as a doctrine of Protestantism; but the Protestant church *as a whole* had not been true to the principle; and he was compelled to regard it as belonging particularly to that branch of the church known as Unitarian. It is one of the most agreeable as well as striking features of the Unitarian denomination, that they take their views of revealed religion directly, *at first hand*, from the Scriptures. They do not go first to the catechism, to the creed, to the church, to learn what is a truth to be believed, and to the Scriptures afterwards, to be confirmed in the views thus ascertained; but they go first to the Scriptures themselves and ask of them, as the oracles of God, what is the mind of the spirit. They acknowledge no authority as binding upon them in matters of faith, but the word of God. The traditional interpretations of that word, which are held by so many in equal reverence with the word itself, they value but little. The article of agreement adopted by different portions of the church, whether Catholic or Protestant, Episcopal or Presbyterian, they regard as checks to the freedom of

individual inquiry, as tending to shut up the Bible from general investigation, and as interposing a human and fallible authority, — human and fallible, yet powerful and decisive, — between the Scriptures and the reason and conscience of man. They do not much care, except as a matter of curiosity, what the Christian Fathers believed; what popes, and bishops, and kings, who lived in times of intellectual and moral darkness, decreed to be doctrines of religion; nor indeed what the Reformers of the sixteenth century, just emerging from the ignorance, and breaking the chains of Romish superstition, thought and said concerning the truths of divine revelation; but referring directly, "to the law and the testimony," to a written Gospel itself, they reverently inquire of that, the only sure source of religious knowledge, what Jesus himself taught, what the Apostles believed and preached, and what they would have mankind receive and do.

Now this, all must see, is a great point; and it is a great point of difference between Unitarians and most other denominations of Christians. Will it be said that those Christians who have adopted the name of "Orthodox," hold this principle as well as Unitarians. Much as he respected them, he must utterly deny that the fact is so. They have never practically consented to this principle. Like the Catholics, they have all, without exception, virtually rejected it. They have always manifested the greatest fear of it. Though challenged over and over again to commit their cause to it, — the cause of our common Christianity, they have steadily refused. I believe, said he, as I believe in God, they dare not do it; and they dare not do it because they see or fear that it would be fatal to their theology. This principle then,

belongs to Unitarianism. It has been long maintained by Unitarian preachers and writers, against the strong opposition, and "the fiery darts" of their theological adversaries. "Take away your false and blinding creeds from before the minds of men," has been their most earnest cry; "let the Scriptures have a fair chance with the people; let the young, and inquirers of every age, be directed to the word of God, for correction and instruction in righteousness, for doctrine and reproof, for precept and example, for faith, and hope, and salvation." This is all we ask. But it has not been done. He had no hope that it soon would be. The creed continues to usurp the place of the Bible, — the creed first, the Bible afterwards. To him this was a most mournful fact in the history of our churches. It manifests a melancholy distrust of the human soul, of its capacity and disposition to receive the truth which God is pleased to reveal. Yet so it is. The fact, unjust as it is to man, injurious as it is to Christianity, and contrary as it is to the great fundamental principle of original Protestantism, the fact exists; it exists in the churches immediately around us; it exists generally throughout Christendom. In confirmation of this he asked, into which of the churches, called "Orthodox," a believer in Christ, of irreproachable character, could be admitted upon such a profession as the following: "I believe in the divine origin and infallible authority of the Holy Scriptures. I believe it is my duty diligently to study them, and to receive all the truth which, from time to time, they shall reveal to my mind. I believe that it is my duty to take up my cross daily and follow Christ. I believe that I shall be judged hereafter according to the principles of the Gospel; and that there-

fore it ought to be my first concern to understand those principles, and my constant care to apply them to the regulation of my heart and life. And whatever of duty is implied in this profession, I solemnly pledge myself, with the help of God, to perform." Would any of those churches receive and welcome him as a Christian brother upon such a profession simply? NOT ONE. And why not? Because the creed is greater than the Bible; because the words which man's wisdom teacheth are felt to be *safer*, as an exponent of faith, than the inspired words of the Author and Finisher of our faith. He who would be admitted into one of those churches must be ready to say in substance, "I believe in your creed now, and I hope always to believe in it. I receive it as a true and sufficient summary of all Scripture doctrine. I promise to acknowledge as brethren all who adopt it, and to walk in love and fellowship with them, and none others." Now consider this. Consider the wrong there is in it. Consider the awful presumption there is in it. Consider how effectually it precludes an unbiassed searching of the sacred page; what a chain it fastens upon the soul to prevent its advancing into other regions of truth; and what a pledge it imposes on the conscience, never to receive as true, any doctrine not contained in the creed. Consider its bearing particularly on a young mind, just aroused to the contemplation of its condition, its duty, and its destiny; just beginning to feel the necessity of self-consecration, and to crave the light and influence of Christian truth. Such a one is brought to the door of the church. He is ignorant of the Scriptures, having never read them with attention, — never sought for wisdom in them as for hid treasure, — and, alas! cases of

this sort are very numerous. He is brought, in his youthful simplicity, in the fervor of his quickened affections, in the sincerity of a heart, now, for the first time, thirsting for the truth and panting after God, — he is brought to the church, and is there presented with a creed, which he is given to understand embodies all the essential doctrines of religion. In a solemn manner he gives his assent to it, and is taken in. He has never examined the subject at all, (for this is the case supposed, and it is by no means an unusual one,) and yet he professes to believe that certain doctrines contained in the creed are the essential doctrines of religion. On what authority? Of the Scriptures, or of his own judgment upon their teachings? No, but of the *church*, and the commandments and traditions of the church! And this is the old Catholic assumption, the very usurpation against which, as recently exhibited in the Episcopal sect, Orthodoxy is uttering her loud and mighty protest. Beautiful consistency! Comment upon it is unnecessary.

And he would confine himself to the effect of this rule upon an individual such as he had just described. He is received into the church upon the profession of his faith in the creed. He considers himself pledged, by the act of acknowledgment, to maintain the doctrines of the creed. And the consequence is, *that he can never afterwards read the word of God with a perfectly unbiassed mind.* Moreover, he is placed under the strongest temptation to pervert that word, if such a thing should be necessary, in order to vindicate and sustain the views which he has received from others, and ignorantly assented to as true. He has been deprived of his liberty as a Christian, or has voluntarily surrendered it to those who ought

to have had too much conscience and too much faith to have permitted the sacrifice. He is no longer a free man in Christ Jesus. If the Scriptures should reveal to him a better way than he has found, higher and more comforting truth, will he dare avow it, and call on his brethren to rejoice with him? Will he not, on the contrary, feel compelled to hide the treasure deep in his bosom, to keep it as a secret even from his best friends, and to put a guard on his tongue, lest, in some moment of forgetfulness it should escape from his lips? Does he not know that persecution awaits him if he speaks out; that excommunication and disgrace are the price he must pay for the utterance of the truth he feels burning within him? He *does* know it; and he is compelled to be silent Cruel tyranny of the creed! No worse wrong; no greater obstacle to the progress of pure, primitive Christianity; no more inexcusable interference with the responsibleness of individuals in matters of faith; no greater usurpation of the authority of Christ, exists in any portion of the Christian church. Against it Unitarians have ever consistently and strenuously remonstrated. Against it, he trusted in God they would continue to remonstrate, until the great doctrine of the sufficiency of the Scriptures, of the Scriptures themselves, in their own open page, in their own simple diction, in their own inexhaustible wisdom, shall be universally received as the doctrine of the Christian church; and, in the words of the resolution, "all extra Scriptural authority in matters of faith, whether that authority be supposed to reside in human creeds or hierarchies and the evil consequences resulting therefrom," shall be utterly and forever abolished.

Rev. Jason Whitman, of Portland, Me., said —

That talking with a Presbyterian minister, once, it was insisted that a creed was imperatively needed to preserve the union of the Church. That very week the Presbyterian church of this country was split in two, by a controversy about the meaning of its creed. He said, that every person, in joining a Church, ought to be allowed his own convictions free and undisturbed. That was his own way; he had told one, who wished to unite with his church, but stated that there was an obstacle, in his differing in opinion upon some matter, from the doctrine he had heard in the pulpit, that the Bible was open to the member as to the minister, — that the source of the Truth was a common one to both, and that the convictions of each were sacred; and, said Mr. W., "whatever others may do, I will defend you in differing from me, through thick and thin." Laymen, he urged, should be left to go immediately to Christ; there should be none to stand between them and their Master. They can have no true interest in Christianity, unless they feel this. And this must be the ground of our prosperity. You inquire of a Romanist, (said a friend of mine who lives in Buenos Ayres,) continued Mr. W., what are his religious opinions, and he will refer you to the Priest. The Priest only undertakes to know the truth. The layman knows nothing, and he cares nothing about his religion, except to shut up his shop on the feast and fast days, and go through the forms of respect to the orders of the Church. He concluded with an expression of his joy at the new activity of our laymen, declaring that, though we have ministers, we have no priesthood, and that as brethren together, our

united and individual cry should be, — "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Upon proposing the second Resolution, Hon. Stephen Fairbanks, Treasurer of the Mission fund, communicated a Report of the receipts; the sources whence they have been derived, and their distribution. Mr. F. in a very concise, but happy manner, gave an account of the mission movement, from its first inception in 1841, to the hour in which he was speaking. The original design was to raise ten thousand dollars per annum, for five consecutive years. The active operations subsequent to the organization, have been, mainly, the product of the past year, so that the year 1843 may be considered as the first financial year.

The amount collected from various societies and individuals, has exceeded a little, the sum that was at first contemplated, being ten thousand and ninety-two dollars and forty-three cents.

The collections towards the fund for the present year already received, amounts to two thousand one hundred and forty dollars.

Arrangements for carrying out the original purpose of the projectors of the mission movement, will be made at the annual meeting in June.

He said that he had found upon inquiry, that this movement had not diminished the donations to our other associations, unless that a slight falling off in one of them might be attributed to that cause.

Rev. James F. Clarke of Boston, said that, in his judgment, to be a Christian and to be a missionary, were

about one and the same thing. Holding opinions about Christianity, does not make a missionary, but to be a Christian does. We want to make Christians, not mere Unitarians. And yet, said he, I value opinions. For every earnest man must have definite conceptions, and those conceptions are opinions. But a missionary must have a higher purpose than to make proselytes to opinions. He must go, not to oppose dogmas, but to convert men to God. He must *walk right over* all these questions of dogmatic theology ; he must soar far above the whole of them. He must do more than merely deny the doctrine of the Trinity, — he must bring men to see God. He need not argue about total depravity, — but he must speak to men as sinners ; he must assure them that they *can't* serve two masters; that they must be for Christ or against him ; and make them *feel* it. I believe that a Unitarian can do it better than another ; for he need not be diverted from his object ; he can appeal directly to the heart of every man, without having objections and questions to meet, growing out of the mysteries and difficulties, of contradictory opinions. We make a great mistake, when we aim at producing merely speculative believers.

A man is not fit to be a missionary who cannot ride over all forms. He must be ready to speak in a church or in a shed, or in a canal boat, without a hymn book, an organ or a pulpit, not to crowds only, but to a single man even, — speak too, as a clergyman, or as a layman. Indeed, every man who has faith in God and Christ, must feel bound to speak, whenever he finds men starving for the bread of life, whether minister or layman, whether ordained or not ordained. It is well to have preachers, instructed, and set apart to preach, but not to have them

constituted a *caste*. Every one should be a preacher of righteousness. If our preachers will labor to build up churches, living churches, not of brick and mortar and wood, you can raise one hundred thousand dollars a year as well as ten thousand dollars. We have great advantages, in preaching the pure Gospel. Other sects have energy, judgment, wisdom, skill, vast and powerful machinery. But their difficulty is in going straight to the soul and conscious experience of man. They are like people who should contrive a wonderful, ingenious and complicated piece of mechanism to make water run up hill. Let us apply ourselves to assisting it in its natural course, till we make the whole world to become the fertile garden of the Lord.

The following remarks were made by Rev. CHARLES BROOKS.

MR. PRESIDENT: — I have been requested to give some account of the state of liberal Christianity in France. A definite and comprehensive idea of this subject can be had only by those who have studied it. I can give you but a few facts, which may serve to guide those who wish to study the most singular religious history of modern times.

The French are a people eminently capable of religious sentiment and enthusiasm. The depths of infidelity and atheism, into which, beyond others, they have plunged, abundantly prove this. The thermometer has the exact power to rise which it has to sink. The French are nervous and intelligent, mercurial and rapid, full of mathematics and as full of poetry. They are very patient in investigation, and very fiery in action. Their religious

history has all the ups and downs of their political. I pass over all these to speak of the present time; and I am happy to say, that Christianity has begun to take hold of France. There are twenty-three Protestant societies in Paris, and such societies are also found in all parts of the kingdom. The Roman Catholic parish church, in the centre of the city of Paris, into which I saw the remains of our good La Fayette carried just ten years ago to-day, was transformed into a Protestant church about eighteen months since, and it is exactly one year since I worshipped in it with a large congregation.

Protestantism is very rapidly spreading. Infidelity, which entered in all the head of society with Voltaire, in '89, settled down, after some years, into the middling classes, and then descending below them, is now passing out at the foot. Protestantism has introduced a new and true theology. Benjamin Constant, the great Cuvier, De Gerando, Cousin, Jouffroy, Garnier, Simon, and such men, have displaced infidelity in many leading minds and enthroned Christianity in its stead. The King and his sons are supposed to be Protestants: but of this I am not sure; yet I am sure that the Duchess of Orleans, the mother of the present heir apparent to the throne, is an avowed and strenuous Protestant. M. Guizot, the real head of the government, is a Protestant, and has written in its defence. These examples among the most intellectual men in the nation are producing the happiest results. The revolution of 1830, which put the present king on the throne, put the Roman Catholic religion off. It is no longer the established religion of the State; but, Protestants are on the same footing as Catholics, and all the Protestant clergy, like the Catholic, have their salaries paid out of the national treasury.

By describing the Protestant churches of Paris, I shall describe those of the provinces; for all France is only an echo of the capital. They are divided, as we are, into sects, such as Lutherans, Calvinists, Baptists, Episcopalians, etc. Some adhere to the Augsbourg Confession of Faith; some to that of Rochelle, and many to neither. The arrangements for public worship with some of them are as follows: they of the same sect have several churches belonging to their communion, and several clergymen ordained over them; and these several ministers preach alternately in each different church belonging to the communion; apportioning out the parochial duties by a similar distribution.

The freedom of inquiry, characteristic of the French, led some students to look beyond a traditional faith; and being aided by the ripe scholars of the once Calvinistic, but now Unitarian Geneva, they came to see the pure and seminal truths of Christianity. For the last ten or fifteen years, these ennobling and expansive views of religion have gradually spread among the people; till now, in the "Reformed Church of Paris," there are several of the most gifted minds who are Unitarians, though they do not allow that name, but rank themselves under the term of "Modern Orthodoxy." They established a weekly newspaper, *(Le Lien,)* and have valiantly fought for the truth as it is in Jesus; fought, I say, for, no sooner had they proclaimed their liberal views than the Calvinists rushed upon them with all the fury of French troops hot for the onset. The pastors Cuvier, Coquerell, Martin, Montoudon, Poulan, and such Christian heroes, stood firm, and all the fiery darts of the wicked could not penetrate their shield of faith. But to drop the figure and state the facts;

the Calvinists resolved to do by stratagem what they could not do by argument: they resolved that at the annual meeting of all the Protestants of France in April, 1841, at Paris, they would destroy all the liberal Christians, by a sort of spiritual St. Bartholomew's day. They formed, in silence and in secrecy, a society called, "A Society to promote the general interests of Protestantism in France." Under this captivating title they engaged at its head a weak young Peer, whom they thought would give a sort of governmental sanction to the horrid act of exclusion which they contemplated.

Among the articles in this new society was this: "that no one should become a member who did not subscribe his belief to those articles of Christian faith which had, *through all ages*, been denominated Orthodox." As the liberal Christians had just published their creed under the title of *Modern Orthodoxy;* this clause in the constitution purposely excluded them from the great body of Protestants in the kingdom! Thus, after fifty years of religious liberty, this new society aimed to establish an exclusive dogmatism; to array Protestants against Protestants, and to destroy the unity of the Church. They were willing to be brothers in Adam, but not brothers in Christ. This bull of excommunication was voted by adopting the constitution of the new society, and thereby ten or fifteen of the most learned theologians, and the most popular preachers, with all their friends, were thus publicly branded. All this I saw, sad part of which I was. It seemed to me that I had, all at once, got back to 1820. To say that this clerical meeting was an excited one, would give but a faint idea of its warmth. It as much surpassed our most fervid ones, as ours surpass the silence of a Quaker's.

It was certainly a severe trial; threatening to be a Servetus meeting. The liberal party stood like Atlas amid the storm; and calm in the clear sky of their own elevated Christian faith, — the lightnings flashed and the thunders rolled beneath them. Cut off now from their former associates and fellow-laborers, they could do nothing else than appeal to the Protestant Churches of the realm. Exclusiveness had triumphed in the "Pastoral Conferences," it now remained to see if it triumphed in the Churches. Their brethren had despoiled them of their rights, it now remained to see if the people consented to this destruction of their freedom. They did therefore make their solemn appeal to the whole Protestant community; and here an unexpected triumph awaited them; for, the sober and pious Christians of all the different denominations felt that the edict of exclusion was popish, antiapostolic and unjust; that it did violence to the principles which the Protestant Church had always avowed, and also caused a schism among those who had two common enemies to combat, namely, sin and the Pope. The consequence was, that many congregations sent in their emphatic refusal to join the new society; thus, in many instances, leaving their minister as almost the sole member. A majority of all the Protestants of France disapproved of the new society, and when its authors were called upon to defend it, they found themselves floored by their opponents. In Paris there are now several churches associated, and some of their pastors are among the leaders of the new society, and some among its most efficient enemies; and though thus differing in doctrine and feeling, they nevertheless go through the same round of churches, preaching by turn in the same pulpits, to the same station-

ary congregations. But to show you how differently the two parties are received by the people, the churches where the Calvinistic preachers officiate, are thin enough, while those where the liberal Christians preach are crowded to excess. At the beginning of each year a programme of all the services in the associated churches is published and distributed gratis among the congregations, enabling each one to know where and when each clergyman officiates. For the last two years I was obliged to go with my family half an hour and oftentimes an hour before the services commenced, in order to secure a good seat; all seats being free. The interest is anti-Laodicean; and I once saw a board partition in the church taken down, during the time between the long prayer and the sermon, in order to bring the crowd behind it within ear shot of the speaker.

The Protestant Churches of France are just now going through the same warfare of sects which divided the Unitarians and Calvinists of Boston twenty-five years ago, and with the prospect of the same happy results to pure Christianity. The most eloquent pulpit orator in France is the leader of the freedom party, and he has many supporters among the scholars and nobility. Since his avowal and defence of liberal Christianity, he has been appointed by the King to the place of public Christian instruction in one of the royal Universities of Paris, and that too in the room of the leader of the new society. The views of God, of Christ, of man and of immortality which he advocates, find a warm response from the best thinkers. They are the views which meet the present condition of society. They meet the wants of an intelligent and enthusiastic people, and they promise to be the regenerating spirit of

God to thousands and thousands of souls; and I believe Paris is more likely to become Unitarian than any city in Europe. I ask then, Christian friends, your sympathy and your prayers for these noble-hearted and self-sacrificing men who are called upon to combat constantly for their Protestant faith against the fierce assaults of the Roman Catholic legions, and at the same time to combat for their modern Orthodoxy against the more trying persecutions of their Calvinistic brethren. They look to the enlightened and liberal Christians of these free States, who have gone before them in this glorious conquest, for light and encouragement. And *how* are we to give them encouragement? Permit me to answer by repeating to you what I have often said to them.

The United States are preaching to the nations from that grand majestic text "All men are born free and equal." We are the leading Republic on this globe. All eyes in Europe are turned upon us; and one of the first men in France said to me "Sir, the success of your government frightens our Kings, and the success of your Churches frightens our Pope." In the face of the nations we are trying to work out the great problem of self-government; we therefore take the lead in the great movement of political freedom; *so*, Christian friends, I think, that Unitarianism from its very nature takes the lead in the religious reforms of the world. As Republicanism is the true exponent of the deep wishes of this age in politics, so liberal Christianity is the true exponent of the deeper wishes of this age in religion. The universal mind, without exactly knowing it, tends equally to both these forms of truth; and both will go together to their final conquest and dominion, or both will sink together to their common grave.

I have no conviction stronger than this, that what Republicanism will be to the *political* history of the future, Unitarianism will be to the *religious* history of that future. Can our responsibilities to this truth be placed in a stronger light? Let us, then, as the best encouragement we can give to the angel-pioneers of truth in other lands, let us this evening send our shouts of congratulation across the waters to our transatlantic brethren, by pledging to them our fidelity to the noble cause of our country and to the still nobler cause of our God.

The Resolutions were passed. And while passing the last one, at the suggestion of Rev. Dr. Parkman, the audience rose.

The Report was then accepted, and the meeting closed by singing the "Dismission Hymn."

ADJOURNED MEETING.

An adjourned meeting was held on Wednesday, the 29th May, at 3 o'clock, in the Berry Street Vestry, Hon. Stephen Fairbanks in the Chair, to consider the resolution offered by Rev. Mr. May, of Leicester. Several other resolutions were offered; and the whole subject was discussed at that meeting, and at a succession of adjourned meetings, on Thursday and Friday. The following preamble and resolutions, by Hon. Stephen C. Phillips, after a full discussion, were adopted:

Whereas, in the course of the year preceding the last Annual Meeting, upon the application of a Unitarian Society in a Slave-holding State, a minister of unexceptionable character and qualifications was appointed by the Executive Committee of this Association, to perform the duties of a Christian teacher and pastor to the said Society, and it was agreed by the Executive Committee that the expense of supporting said minister should be defrayed in part by this Association; and whereas the said minister, upon reaching the field of his labors, was not permitted to engage in the duties of the office to which he had been appointed; and whereas the officers of the said Society, in a public circular, have seen fit to place their justification in this proceeding, upon the ground that the said minister was supposed to entertain, and to have publicly expressed opinions adverse to the institution of Slavery; and whereas the Executive Committee, upon being informed of this proceeding of the officers of the said Society, promptly gave notice to them, that in view of this proceeding no further steps would be taken in reference to the appointment of a minister for the said Society; and whereas this Association deems it its duty to review this extraordinary proceeding in the particulars which have been referred to, and to express its opinion upon the ground of action assumed by the officers of the said Society, and the measures adopted by the Executive Committee; and whereas the consideration of this subject was commenced by this Association at the last annual meeting but not then concluded, and it is therefore necessary that it should now be prosecuted to final action; therefore

Resolved, — That while it is not deemed within the

province of this Association, in the course of its ordinary proceedings, to entertain any question, or to adopt any measure in relation to the institution of Slavery, it is felt to be a duty, under the extraordinary circumstances of the case before us, to deliberate calmly and solemnly upon the subject as thus presented for our consideration, and to declare and record the result of our deliberations.

Resolved, — That in the consideration of this subject, we recognise the obligation devolving upon us as a Christian Association, to proceed upon Christian principles and in a Christian spirit; and to make it our single object to "speak the truth in love."

Resolved, — That, viewing the institution of Slavery in the light of Christianity, we cannot fail to perceive that it conflicts with the natural rights of human beings as the equal children of a common Father, and that it subverts the fundamental principle of Christian Brotherhood.

Resolved, — That in the necessary effects of Slavery upon the personal and social condition, and upon the moral and religious character of all affected by it, we perceive an accumulation of evils, over which Christianity must weep, against which Christianity should remonstrate, and for the removal of which Christianity appeals to the hearts and consciences of all disciples of Jesus to do what they can, by their prayers, by the indulgence and expression of their sympathy, and by the unremitting and undisguised exertion of whatever moral and religious influence they may possess.

Resolved, — That, in conformity to the views which have been expressed in the foregoing Resolutions, it is impossible for this Association to recognise the principle, that, in the case of any minister or missionary who

may be aided or employed by the Executive Committee, it should be deemed a disqualification for the performance of the appropriate duties of his office in any section of the country, that he is supposed or known to entertain and to have publicly expressed opinions adverse to the institution of Slavery; and that accordingly this Association approve and ratify the proceedings of the Executive Committee in the case which has been under consideration, and recommend the adoption of similar measures in any similar case which may hereafter occur.

Resolved, — That we commend this expression of our views to the candid and serious consideration of the Society, the proceeding of whose officers has furnished the occasion for the adoption of these Resolutions, and that we hereby assure them, that, in thus attempting to discharge the Christian duty of remembering those in bonds as bound with them, we have equally at heart the best interests of our brethren, upon whom, as much as upon ourselves, rests the responsibility of illustrating the practical tendencies of the precious faith, to which we all owe a common attachment.

The following amendment to the Constitution was offered by N. A. Barrett, Esq.:

"That no one shall hereafter be elected a member of the Board of Directors of this Association more than two years in succession."

Mr. Barrett likewise offered a resolution, instructing the Executive Committee to change the hour of meeting for business at the Annual Meeting, from 6½ o'clock, P. M., to 9 o'clock, A. M., of Tuesday.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

1. The name of this Association shall be THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

2. The object of this Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity throughout our country.

3. Unitarian Christians throughout the United States shall be invited to unite and co-operate with this Association.

4. An annual subscription of one dollar shall constitute a person a member so long as such subscription shall be paid; and a subscription of thirty dollars shall constitute a person a member for life.

5. The officers shall be a President, fifteen Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, who shall have the care of all the business and interests of the Association under the control of the Executive Committee, an Assistant Secretary, who, in case of the absence or sickness of the General Secretary, shall perform such duties of a Recording and Corresponding Secretary as may require immediate attention; a Treasurer and three Directors.

6. The Directors, Secretaries, and Treasurer shall constitute the Executive Committee, who shall meet once in each month, and shall have the direction of the funds and operations of the Association.

7. An annual meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Executive Committee shall deem advisable, of which due notice shall be given, and at which officers shall be chosen, reports be made, and any other business be transacted, which may come before the Association.

8. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur among the officers between any two annual meetings.

9. Any amendment of this Constitution shall be proposed at one annual meeting, and may be accepted at the next anniversary, if two-thirds of the members present be in favor of such amendments.

10. There shall also be a Council of the Association consisting of not less than twenty-five, nor more than ——— members, to be nominated by the presiding officer, and chosen by a hand vote at the annual meeting, whose duty it shall be, whenever it is necessary, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, to consider and determine what further measures may be taken to increase the usefulness of the Association, by what means they may be carried into execution, and in what manner funds can be provided for the purpose. The Council shall hold a stated annual meeting on the Thursday succeeding the annual meeting of the Association, at four o'clock, P. M. The Executive Committee shall call special meetings whenever they shall deem it necessary, or at the request of any five members of the Council; and twelve members shall constitute a quorum. The powers of the Executive Committee with regard to all matters not acted upon by the Council are to remain the same as heretofore.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, September 23, 1826, as amended March, 30, 1830.

Resolved, That every member of the Association be entitled to one copy of every tract *of the first and second series* published by the Association *during the year for which his subscription is entered.*

Vote of the Executive Committee, passed January 4, 1826.

Voted, That no Society be recognised as auxiliary to this Association, the terms of subscription to which are less than those required in the Constitution of this Association.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, June 20, 1833.

Voted, That the 4th article of the Constitution be so construed, that any one who shall pay thirty dollars for the General Agency of the American Unitarian Association, either at once, or by annual instalments within five years, shall be considered a life member.

CLERGYMEN MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

The following Clergymen have been made members for life of the American Unitarian Association, by the donation of thirty dollars or more, principally from ladies of their respective societies.

Abbott, Abiel
Alden, Seth
Alger, Horatio
Allen, Joseph
*Andrews, William
Arnold, A. C. L.
Allen, Joseph H.
*Bancroft, Aaron, D. D.
Barrett, Samuel
Bartlett, John
Barry, William
*Bascom, Ezekiel L.
Bates, Reuben
Bellows, Henry W.
Bigelow, Andrew
Brazer, John, D. D.
Briggs, Charles
Brooks, Charles
Brooks, Charles T.
Brown, Addison
Buckingham, Edgar
Burton, Warren
Burnap, Geo. W.
*Channing, Wm. E., D. D.
Clark, Amos
Clarke, Samuel
Cole, Jonathan
Colman, Henry
Coolidge, J. I. T.
Crafts, E. P.
Crosby, J.
Cunningham, Francis
Cutler, Curtis
Chandler, Seth
*Damon, David
Dewey, Orville, D. D.
Doggett, Theophilus P.
Edes, Henry, D. D.
Edes, Henry F.
Edes, Edward H.
Emmons, Henry
Everett, O. C.
Ellis, George E.
Farley, Frederick A.
Field, Joseph, D. D.
*Flint, Jacob
Flint, James, D. D.
Fosdick, David
Fox, Thomas B.
Frothingham, William
Frost, Barzillai
Furness, William H.
Gage, Nathaniel
Gannett, Ezra S., D. D.
Gannett, Thomas B.
Gray, Frederick T.
*Greenwood, F. W. P., D. D.
Hall, Edward B.
Hall, Nathaniel
Hamilton, Luther
Harrington, Joseph, Jr.
Hedge, F. H.
Hill, Alonzo
Holland, F. W.

* Dead.

Hosmer, George W.
Howe, Moses
Huntington, Frederick D.
Ingersoll, George G.
Johnson, Rufus A.
Kendall, James, D. D
Lamson, Alvan, D. D.
Lincoln, Calvin
*Little, Robert
Livermore, A. A.
Loring, Bailey
Lothrop, Samuel K.
Lambert, Henry
Lunt, William P.
May, Samuel, Jr.
Merrick, J. M.
Miles, Henry A.
Moore, Josiah
Motte, Mellish I.
Muzzey, Artemas B.
Newell, William
Nichols, Ichabod, D. D.
Noyes, George R., D. D.
Osgood, Peter
Osgood, Samuel
Osgood, Joseph
Palfrey, John G., D. D.
*Parker Nathan, D. D.
Parker, Theodore
Parkman, Francis, D. D.
Parkman, John
Peabody, Wm. B. O.
Pierpont, John
*Phipps, H. G.
Putnam, George
Pike, Richard
*Ripley, Ezra, D. D.
Ripley, George
Ripley, Samuel
Richardson, Joseph
Robbins, Samuel D.
Robbins, Chandler
Robinson, Charles
Rogers, T. F.
Sanger, Ralph
Sears, E. H.
Sewall, Charles C.
Sewall, Edmund Q.
Shackford, C. C.
Simmons, George F.
Smith, Amos
Stebbins, Rufus P.
Stetson, Caleb
*Storer, John P. B.
Sullivan, Thomas R.
*Sweet, John D.
Sargent, J. T.
Thayer, Christopher T.
*Thayer, Nathaniel, D. D.
Thompson, James W.
Thompson, James, D. D.
Waite, Josiah K.
Walker, James, D. D.
*Ware, Henry, Jr., D. D.
Ware, William
Wellington, Charles
*Wells, George W.
*Whitman, Bernard
Whitman, Jason
Whitman, Nathaniel
Williams, George A.
Weiss, John
Young, Alexander

OTHER MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

Abbot, Samuel
Abbott, Miss Abigail
Abbot, Ezra
Adams, Benjamin T.
Adams, James, Jr.
Adams, Philip
Alger, Cyrus
Alger, Francis
Ames, Seth
Ames, David W.
Ames, Mrs. David
Andrews, Ebenezer T.
Aspinwall, Samuel
Atherton, Charles H.
Appleton, Nathan
Appleton, Charles T.
Appleton, Francis
Appleton, J. R., Esq.
Ball, S. S.
Bancroft, Mrs. B. D.
Bangs, Josiah
Barrett, Nathaniel A.
Barker, Joseph A.
Baker, Henry F.
Bigelow, Alonson
Bigelow, John
*Bird, John H.
Bixby, Miss Keziah
Blanchard, Hezekiah
Blake, Mrs. Sarah
Bliss, Theodore
*Bond, George
Bond, George W.
*Bowditch, Nathaniel
Bowles, Samuel
*Bradlee, Joseph P.
Brackett, Samuel E.
Brooks, Peter C.
Brewster, Oliver
Brewster, William
Cartwright, Charles W.
Carew, Joseph
Chapin, Harvey
Chapman, Mrs. Jonathan
Chapman, Mrs. Margaret
Clapp, Joshua
Colton, George
*Cotton, John
Cotton, Joseph, Jr.
Cobb, Elijah
Coffin, George W.
Cooke, Mrs. Mary F.
Coolidge, Joseph
Crocker, James H.
Crocker, George A.
Cushing, T. P.
Cushman, Henry W.
*Childs, Richards
Clapp, Mrs. Mary
Clapp, Miss Catharine
Dale, Samuel H.
Dascomb, Thomas R.
Dana, Dexter
Danforth, Isaac
Davis, Charles S.
Davis, James
Davis, James, Jr.
Davis, Joseph
Denny, Daniel
Dix, Miss D.
Dorr Samuel
Dorr, John

Draper, James
Dwight, William
Dwight, George
Dwight, Mrs. Mary
Dwight, Jonathan
Eager, William
Edwards, Elisha
Ellis, David
Ellis, Jonathan, Jr.
Emerson, George B.
Emmons, John L.
Everett, Otis
Everett, Moses, Esq.
Fairbanks, Stephen
Fairbanks, Henry P.
Farley, Mrs. Frederick A.
Fearing, Albert
Fitch, Jeremiah
Fisher, Joshua
Foster, Charles W.
Fowle, C. S.
Foster, Charles A.
Foot, Homer
Francis, Eben
Frost, George
Fowler, James, Esq.
Gassett, Henry
Gould, Benjamin A.
Gould, Lewis
Gould, Mrs. Elizabeth
Gray, Harrison
Green, Ezra
Hammond, Daniel
Hammond, Samuel
Hall, Jacob
*Hall, Mrs. Edward B.
Hall, Sarah B.
Hawes, Prince
Hedge, Barnabas
Hewes, Abraham, Jr.
Hewett, H. N.
Heath, Charles
Hendee, Charles J.
Hickling, Charles
Howe, Zadock
Howe, John
Hoar, Samuel
Hodges, George
Holland, Mrs. F. W.
Howard, John
Howard, Charles
Howard, Abraham
Hunt, Nathaniel P.
Holbrook, Ann B.
Inches, Henderson
Inches, Miss
Jackson, Francis
Jernegan, Mrs. Mary
Johnson, James
Jones, Mrs. J. C.
*Johnson, Milton
Jones, Miss Charlotte
*King, Gedney
King, Daniel P.
King, Samuel B.
*Kuhn, George H.
Lawrence, Amos
*Lawrence, Luther
Lawrence, William
Lamson, Benjamin
Lamson, John
Lane, George
Lewis, S. S.
Lewis, Mrs. S. S.
Lincoln, Oliver
Lincoln, M. S.

Livermore, Isaac
Livermore, George
Lord, George,
Lord, Ivory
Lord, Mrs. Sarah C.
Low, Francis
Low, John J.
Low, Mrs. Rachel
Lombard, Ammi C.
Loring, William J.
Loring, J.
May, Joseph
May, Samuel
Marsh, Ephraim
Manley, John R.
Manley, Miss Mary
Manley, Mrs. Abigail
Mellen, Michael
*Metcalf, E. W.
Miles, Mrs. Henry A.
Morgan, Charles W.
Morton, Ichabod
Munson, Israel
Manning, Mrs. Elizabeth
Newell, J. R.
Newman, Miss Mary
Newman, Miss Margaret
Nichols, Charles C.
Nichols, Miss C. K.
Olmsted, Charles H.
Orne, William W.
Osborn, Kendall
Osgood, Isaac
Otis, Harrison G.
Owen, John
Parker, Daniel P.
Parsons, Thomas
Parsons, William
Parkman, George
*Parkman, Mrs. Sarah
Peabody, Joseph
Peabody, Mrs. W. B. O.
*Peele, Willard
Perkins, Thomas H.
*Pickman, T. Benjamin
Pickman, Dudley L.
Pierce, S. B.
Pierce, John B.
Pray, Lewis G.
Preble, William P.
Prescott, William
Prentiss, John
Phillips, Stephen C.
Phillips, Hon. Jonathan
Phillips, Mrs. John
Putnam, Mrs. George
Rantoul, Robert
Rice, Henry
Richardson, James B.
Rhoades, Stephen
Roberts, Amos M.
Rogers, John
Rogers, John Gray
Russell, John B.
Russell, Nathaniel
Salisbury, Samuel
Saunders, Mrs. Elizabeth
Savage, James
Seaver, George
*Seaver, Charles
Seaver, Benjamin
Sewall, Daniel
Shaw, Robert G.
Shaw, Lemuel
Shaw, Francis G.
Shove, Jonathan

Smith, Melancthon
Smith, Mrs. D.
Smith, Joseph M.
Southwick, Phillip R.
Sprague, Noah P.
*Stanton, Francis
Stearns, Henry
Stephens, Nathan
Stone, Lowell M.
Story, Joseph
Swett, Samuel
Sweetser, Samuel
*Sullivan, William
St. John, Samuel
Stebbins, Festus
Shaw, W. C., Esq.
Townsend, Henry B.
Thayer, Mrs. Christopher T.
Thomson, John
*Tucker, Richard D.
Tuckerman, Gustavus
Tufts, Mrs. Nathan
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INDEX TO VOLUME XVII.

A.

The Atonement, Tract 201, by Rev. Geo. W. Burnap, 281.
Auxiliary Associations, the number formed and re-organized the past year, 346.
Adams, Rev. Mr., a Missionary in Wisconsin Territory, 349.
Adjourned Meeting of the Association, an account of it, 375.

B.

Barry, Rev. William, his Tract on Christian Doctrine, 245.
Burnap, Rev. Geo. W., his Tract on the Atonement, 281.

C.

Councillors of the Association, 344.
Candid Answer to Candid Inquiries, or "Thoughts on Christian Doctrine," Tract 200, by Rev. W. Barry, 245.
Channing, Rev. Dr., his Tract on the Church, 61.
Constitution of the Association, 379.
Conant, Rev. Mr., a Missionary in Illinois — an extract from one of his letters, 349.

D.

Dewey, Rev. Dr., his Tract on Retribution, 1.
Doctrines of Unitarians, Tract 202, 305.

E.

Ellis, Rev. Geo. E., his Tract, "The Relative Obligations of Christians to the Heathen," 221.
Expenditures, 353.
Edgar, Rev. Dr., of Ireland, his Remarks on Unitarianism, 354.

F.

Fairbanks, Henry P., Esq., his Report, 339.
France, progress of Unitarianism in that country, 368.

G.

Gilman, Rev. Dr., Tract 193, 45.

"A Good Life," its Signification and Value, by Rev. F. D. Huntington, 207.
Griffiths, Rev. Mr., a Missionary at Palmyra and Parisville, Ohio, 349.

H.

Huntington, Rev. F. D., his Tract 198, 207.
History of Unitarianism. Reference to Modern Unitarianism in Europe — American Unitarianism — its date — its progress to the commencement of the present century — its state during the first fifteen years of this century — 1815 an epoch in its history — First controversy — its origin and results — Second controversy — First separation between Orthodox and Unitarian Congregationalists. Tract 202, 324.

I.

India, some account of our Missions there, in Rev. Geo. E. Ellis's Tract, 239.

L.

Lamson, Rev. Dr., his Tract on Unitarianism, 305.
Life Members, the number added the past year, and their names, 346.
Life Members, a list of them, 381.

M.

Meadville Theological School, 351.
Missionaries, the number employed the past year, 348.

N.

Nineteenth Report, Tract 203, 337.
Needy Societies aided, their number, &c., 347.
Nichols, Rev. Dr., his letter on resigning the office of President of the A. U. A., 355.

O.

Officers of the Association, 343.
"On the Church," a discourse by Rev. Dr. Channing, 61.

P.

Porter, Rev. J. Scott, his Tract — 1st, Christ maintained the same views of the Unity of God which were propounded in the old Testament; 2d, His Doctrine concerning himself — expressly disclaimed all thought of equality with God — disclaimed divine knowledge in express terms — disclaimed the attribute of divine power — and of divine wisdom — affirms his own inferiority; 3d, Doctrine of Jesus respecting the Holy Spirit, 107.
Protestant Churches in France, Mr. Brooks's speech, 37.
Phillips, Hon. Stephen C., his Resolutions, 375.

R.

Relative Obligations of Christians to the Heathen, Tract

199, by Rev. George E. Ellis, 221.
Retribution, the law of, Tract 192, 1.
Robbins, Rev. Chandler, his Tract on the life and character of Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., D. D., 141.
Receipts of the Association, 353
Resolutions, presented by Rev. Mr. Lothrop, 357.

S.

Statistics of the denomination — number of Societies and Churches — other Unitarians besides Congregationalists — Unitarian periodicals — Am. Unitarian Association — present condition and prospects of Unitarianism. Tract 202, 330.

T.

"Take Heed How Ye Hear," by Rev. Dr. Gilman. In the first place, *before* visiting the house of God there should be a due preparation of the heart; again, some go to the house of God from a low, improper, inadequate motive — others fail in cultivating a right tone of their *affections*. In the second place, the *understanding* must take its part in preparing the hearer of the Gospel for the execution of the spirit of our Lord's command — a considerable acquaintance with the Scriptures important — Duties in the house of God — peculiar duties arising from the hearer's relation to God — punctual attendance on public worship important — an indulgent candor due to the Pastor — good impressions made there to be carried into the world, 45.
Treasurer's Report, 339.
Tracts, the number published the past year, 346.
Thomson, James W., his remarks at the anniversary, 359

U.

Unitarianism, the doctrine of Matthew's Gospel, by Rev. William Ware. Tract 197, 179.
Unitarianism, the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Rev. J. Scott Porter. Tract 195, 107.
Unitarianism in France, Mr. Brooks's remarks at the anniversary, 368.

V.

Vantassell, Rev. Mr., a Missionary in the State of New York, 5.

W.

Ware, Rev. Henry, Jr., D.D., a discourse in commemoration of his life and character, by Rev. Chandler Robbins, 141.
Ware, Rev. Wm., his Tract, Unitarianism the doctrine of Matthew's Gospel, 179.
"What is Unitarianism?" a

Tract by Rev. Alvan Lamson, D. D. Doctrines of Unitarians — their Faith misunderstood — great distinguishing feature of Unitarianism — diversity of opinion among Unitarians — character of God — Gospel of Jesus originated in his mercy — Unitarian views of his justice — Jesus Christ a distinct being from the Father — and inferior to him — evidence for proving this — current language of the Bible — teachings of the Scriptures relating to the Son — their views of Trinitarian proof texts — concessions of Trinitarian critics — difficulties attending a belief of the Trinity — its intrinsic incredibility — Unitarians do not address Christ directly in prayer — reasons for not doing it — his nature, character and offices — Unitarian views of the Divinity of Christ — the Atonement—the Holy Spirit — the terms of Salvation — the new birth — retribution — the Bible — their reply to the charge of unduly exalting human reason — reverence for human nature — need of help — evil of sin, 305.

Walworth, Rev. Mr., an extract from one of his letters, giving an account of his missionary labors in Northern Illinois and Wisconsin Territories, 349.

Whitman, Jason, his speech at the anniversary.

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